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CCAS Statement of Purpose

Critical Asian Studies continues to be inspired by the statement of purpose formulated in 1969 by its parent organization, the Committee of Concerned Asian Scholars (CCAS). CCAS ceased to exist as an organization in 1979, but the BCAS board decided in 1993 that the CCAS Statement of Purpose should be published in our journal at least once a year.

We first came together in opposition to the brutal aggression of the United States in Vietnam and to the complicity or silence of our profession with regard to that policy. Those in the field of Asian studies bear responsibility for the consequences of their research and the political posture of their profession. We are concerned about the present unwillingness of specialists to speak out against the implications of an Asian policy committed to ensuring American domination of much of Asia. We reject the legitimacy of this aim, and attempt to change this policy. We recognize that the present structure of the profession has often perverted scholarship and alienated many people in the field.

The Committee of Concerned Asian Scholars seeks to develop a humane and knowledgeable understanding of Asian societies and their efforts to maintain cultural integrity and to confront such problems as poverty, oppression, and imperialism. We realize that to be students of other peoples, we must first understand our relations to them.

CCAS wishes to create alternatives to the prevailing trends in scholarship on Asia, which too often spring from a parochial cultural perspective and serve selfish interests and expansionism. Our organization is designed to function as a catalyst, a communications network for both Asian and Western scholars, a provider of central resources for local chapters, and a community for the development of anti-imperialist research.

Passed, 28–30 March 1969
Boston, Massachusetts
Remembering the Bomb: The Fiftieth Anniversary in the United States and Japan
Vietnamese Commemorations of the U.S. War

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The Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars is a refereed quarterly that welcomes unsolicited essays, reviews, translations, interviews, photo essays, and letters about Asia, particularly those that challenge the accepted formulas for understanding Asia, the world, and ourselves. Manuscripts should be submitted in quadruplicate, and generally should be unpublished and not under consideration for publication elsewhere. For more details on our philosophy and requirements, send for a copy of our "Guidelines for BCAS Authors." For information about book reviews in particular, see the Books to Review section of this issue. The Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars, Inc., is a nonprofit corporation, and contributions are needed, appreciated—and tax-deductible.
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84 Books to Review
Contributors


Ellen H. Hammond studied Japanese history at the University of Wisconsin in Madison, Wisconsin, U.S.A. She now teaches American history and Japanese women’s history at Chiba Keiai Jr. College in Sakura, Chiba Prefecture, Japan.

Laura Hein teaches Japanese history at Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois, U.S.A. She has written on economic thought, reconstruction, and visions of Asia in postwar Japan. Her article, “Free-Floating Anxieties on the Pacific: Japan and the West Revisited,” will appear in Diplomatic History in 1996.

Edward T. Linenthal teaches religion and U.S. culture at the University of Wisconsin in Oshkosh, Wisconsin, U.S.A. He worked for the National Park Service during the fiftieth anniversary events at the USS Arizona Memorial in December 1991, and he was a member of the advisory committee for the Smithsonian exhibition The Last Act: The Atomic Bomb and the End of World War II. His books include Sacred Ground: Americans and Their Battlefields and Preserving Memory: The Struggle to Create America’s Holocaust Museum.

Richard H. Minear teaches history at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst, Massachusetts, U.S.A. He is the editor and translator of Hiroshima: Three Witnesses (1990) and the translator of Black Eggs: Poems by Kurihara Sadako (1994).


Sodei Rinjiro teaches political science at Hosei University in Tokyo, Japan. He has written extensively on the Occupation era and also on Hiroshima survivors in the United States. For many years he was the director of the Maruki Art Museum near Tokyo.

Martha Kendall Winnacker works for the central administration of the University of California in Oakland, California, U.S.A. Prior to that she was the publications director of the California Historical Society and from 1976 to 1984 the codirector of the Southeast Asia Resource Center. She has lived in Taiwan and Japan and traveled elsewhere in Asia, and was a founding member of the Committee of Concerned Asian Scholars.

Yui Daizaburo teaches contemporary history, particularly the postwar history of Japan-U.S. relations, at Hitotsubashi University in Tokyo, Japan. He is the author of Sengo sekai chitsujo no keisei (The formation of the postwar world order) (1985), Mikan no senryo kaikaku (The unfinished reform in Occupied Japan) (1989), and Nichibei senso-kan no sokoku (Controversial images of wars between Japan and the United States) (1995).

The cartoon on the front cover comments on the radical scaling back of the Enola Gay exhibit at the Smithsonian’s Air and Space Museum in Washington, D.C. The Smithsonian had planned to open its display of the front section of the fuselage of the Enola Gay, the plane that dropped the atomic bomb on Hiroshima, with an exhibit that would delve into the complexities of the decision to drop the bomb and would show the devastation it caused. However, veterans and others attacked the museum so vehemently that after repeated attempts to modify the exhibit to meet their demands the curators finally settled for a totally eviscerated exhibit. This issue of the Bulletin focuses on this controversy and a parallel one in Japan while exploring the question of how wars should be commemorated and understood. This 1994 cartoon is by Jeff Danziger. © Christian Science Monitor, reprinted here with permission.

With the exception of the names of authors in the list of books to review at the end of the issue, the Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars generally follows the East and Northeast Asian practice of placing surnames first in Chinese, Japanese, and Korean names. In the few instances where this policy is not followed, usually because the person lives and works exclusively or almost exclusively in the West, the Bulletin underlines the family name to avoid confusion.


The Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars (BCAS) is deeply indebted to Laura Hein for guest editing this special issue on commemorating war, particularly World War II. Impressed with the implications of the controversy in the United States over the Smithsonian’s Enola Gay exhibit and the parallel controversy in Japan over the proposed War Dead Peace Memorial Hall, Laura felt that these controversies deserved to be analyzed in a special issue of BCAS. After pronouncing “I want to see it happen, and here is what I propose,” Laura began requesting submissions dealing with different aspects of these controversies and related issues. Throughout the project Laura exhibited a remarkable mix of vision, skill, knowledge, patience with details, and willingness to do the work needed. Thank you, Laura! BCAS also wishes to thank the authors who responded so quickly and well to Laura’s appeal, and board members Marilyn Young, Tom Grunfeld, and Ed Friedman for helping Laura above and beyond the call of duty with evaluating and editing the material when it came in. And special thanks to Richard Minear for providing a copy of Senate Resolution 257 as well as most of the cartoons used throughout the issue, and to the many others who also contributed fine graphics: Ed Linenthal, Yui Daizaburo, Martha Winnacker, Tom Grunfeld, Mark Selden, Ted Przychoda, Joe Morton, Ed Hedemann, and a number of institutions. Lastly, Peter Zarrow did well in assembling an appropriate accompaniment of short reviews of books about Japan. So many people working together—thank you, one and all!
Remembering the Bomb: The Fiftieth Anniversary in the United States and Japan

Introduction: The Bomb as Public History and Transnational Memory

by Laura Hein

Commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the end of World War II in the United States has proved far more contentious than most people expected. Not only was the recent debate over a Smithsonian Institution exhibit on the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki marked by an extraordinary level of disagreement and rancor, but by the end the exhibit itself had been censored from public view. The greatest struggles were over the portrayal of Americans to themselves and over such issues as the rights of various groups to try to influence public opinion and even shut down public debate, Americans' freedom to question government leaders, and the standards by which public forums, such as museum exhibits, should be judged.

Moreover, there was little agreement about what precisely about 1945 was being celebrated. In general, the political ideals of 1940s America—antifascism, democratic expression, public celebration of a diverse citizenry, and internationalism—fell by the wayside. Instead, what was left was an idealized narrative of U.S. culture, emphasizing decisiveness, bravery, simplicity, and national unity. That narrative suppressed the institutionalized racism of 1940s U.S. society and all references to doubt and disunity, and glorified the bombings as the embodiment of merciful decisiveness. Thus, for example, although General Eisenhower felt free to question the use of the bombs in 1945, public mention of his doubts was branded unpatriotic in 1995. For half a century now Americans have both celebrated the bombings of two cities for hastening the war's end and worried that those acts may have cost too much in human suffering and postwar nuclear danger. That ambiguity was at the core of the debate, and in the end all recognition of it was censored. Disturbingly, the insistence that such costs are reasonable and that to question one's government is to be disloyal is far more reminiscent of Japanese than of U.S. wartime society. Not so surprisingly, Japanese commemorations of the war and defeat are also contentious—and the two national discussions influence each other, as the articles gathered here demonstrate.

The History of the Exhibit

In March 1993 the director of the Smithsonian's Air and Space Museum, Martin Harwit, proposed a comprehensive exhibit on the use of the two atomic bombs against Japan in 1945. He hoped to explore longstanding questions about the necessity of bombing and its price in human suffering, rather than just surveying the many technical difficulties overcome by actually dropping the bomb. The exhibit was to include a section on the effect of the bomb at "ground zero" with artifacts lent by Hiroshima and Nagasaki and photos taken in the hours after the bombing. In the words of a July 1993 planning document: "The Museum hopes that the proposed exhibition will contribute to a more profound discussion of the atomic bombings among the general public of the United States, Japan and elsewhere." By the time the planned exhibit was abruptly canceled nineteen months later, the museum personnel had learned they were breaking a taboo by initiating that "more profound discussion."

The exhibit was a relatively new departure for the National Air and Space Museum. Although other branches of the

The original plan was for the Enola Gay exhibit at the Smithsonian's National Air and Space Museum to include a section on the effects of the atomic bomb at ground zero in the hope that such a display would "contribute to a more profound discussion of the atomic bombings among the public in the United States, Japan, and elsewhere." Pictures like this one showing the devastated center of Hiroshima and the Little Boy bomb that did the damage would have been an important part of that section. This is a U.S. Air Force photo.

Smithsonian have created major interpretive exhibits for decades, the Air and Space Museum has in the past mainly limited itself to a more celebratory mode, honoring U.S. science and concentrating on technological puzzles. Hosting the planned event would also have meant that the Air and Space Museum was joining the trend of museums of all kinds across the country to adopt a more interpretive, interactive style. They have done so both to expand their popularity and to conform with standard learning theory—that people learn more when engaged in and able to interact with the subject matter. In other words, although the envisioned exhibit was new for the Air and Space Museum, it was squarely within contemporary museum and education practice. It was also squarely within the bounds of contemporary historical scholarship, which has raised substantial doubts as to the necessity of dropping the bomb or any universal desire to do so on the part of U.S. military leaders at the time.

In January 1994 the six-person team developing the exhibit, led by Thomas Crouch and Michael Neufeld, finished a detailed 558-page, five-part script, then titled The Crossroads: The End of World War II, the Atomic Bomb, and the Onset of the Cold War. It was an impressive, imaginative project. The first part, "A Fight to the Finish," covered the last months of the Pacific War, including the battles of Iwo Jima and Okinawa. The second, the intellectual core of the exhibit, examined the decision to drop the bomb. It included references to dissenters among the U.S. government inner circle, including Admiral William Leahy's 1950 comment that in 1945 he had protested that to use the bomb was to adopt the "ethical standards common to barbarians in the dark ages." The second section also introduced some of the controversy over the precise relationship between the use of the bombs and the Japanese surrender. The third section focused on the technical problems of delivering the bomb, such as developing the B-29 and training the crew. The fourth section, the "emotional center" of the exhibit, focused on the awesome power of the bomb as experienced on the ground. It included many photographs of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, artifacts from the two cities, and a video on the long-term effects of radiation poisoning. The final section presented the far-reaching costs of using the bomb, including the nuclear arms race and global nuclear anxieties.

To the curators' surprise, this plan was vigorously contested by the Air Force Association (AFA) and later by the American Legion. The AFA, closely associated with the aerospace industry and U.S. military policy involving air power, led a vicious attack against the exhibit and its curators. Its members are

3. According to the Chicago Tribune, the then-secretary of the Smithsonian, Robert McC. Adams, complained about the exhibit as early as the summer of 1993, arguing that it should commemorate the end of the war and not center on the bomb itself. "Smithsonian Puts Enola Gay Display on Hold," Chicago Tribune, 21 Jan. 1995.
generally air force veterans (not all from World War II) but often also employees of major aerospace companies and defense contractors, a common second career. The AFA was particularly critical of the explicit presentation of Japanese bomb victims, the suggestion that dropping the bomb may not have been necessary, the failure to emphasize Japanese atrocities to their satisfaction, and the suggestion that racism played a part in the decision to drop the bomb. They also insisted that to treat dropping the bomb as anything but a just and necessary deed was to insult the memory of those soldiers who died in the Pacific during World War II.4

With considerable success the veterans organizations mobilized their members to write letters and lobby Congress to pressure the Smithsonian Institution into repudiating the exhibit. In September 1994 Senator Nancy Landon Kassebaum introduced in the Senate a nonbinding resolution that editorialized that the bomb was "momentous in helping to bring World War II to a merciful end." The resolution also warned the Smithsonian that it should not develop an exhibit guilty of "impugning the memory of those who gave their lives for freedom," and several senators threatened the Smithsonian with massive funding cuts if it neglected its "obligation under the Federal law to portray history in the proper context of the times."

Retreating before the onslaught, in three successive drafts the Air and Space Museum curators revised the exhibit to accommodate more and more of those criticisms. By the fourth draft, finished in late September 1994, just after the Senate resolution, they had accepted many of the veterans groups' criticisms. At the insistence of these groups, the curators added an entirely new section on the earlier stages of the Pacific War, including the 1937 massacre in Nanjing, the attack on Pearl Harbor, and the Bataan Death March. Other new material on the Pacific War emphasized U.S. military casualties and the valor of U.S. soldiers, particularly at Iwo Jima. Some subjects were reframed, such as the material on the kamikaze pilots, which moved from humanist empathy to bemused horror. The first draft had emphasized the samurai ideal of an elite group of professional warriors set apart from ordinary Japanese and the pathos of the young recruits. The final draft, by contrast, rooted their motivation in timeless "Japanese culture" and such intense peer pressure that "official coercion was not required." They also added a reference to Japan's atomic bomb research, including an unsubstantiated argument that the Japanese would have used this against the United States if they could have. Finally, they inserted the claim that strategic bombers were unable to differentiate between the closely entwined civilian and military targets in Japan.

The September 1994 version also eliminated or sharply curtailed presentation of several earlier themes. All references to debates in 1945 on the necessity and morality of dropping the bomb or to Japanese surrender attempts were cut, even though this material had been drawn from reputable—and not particularly controversial—historical research. The curators also removed all references to discrimination or racism against Japanese, such as the internment camps for Japanese-Americans. The most extensive cuts, however, were in the section on the effects of the bomb on the ground. After specific complaints that the number of images of Japanese victims was too high relative to those of U.S. casualties, photos of victims were cut from sixty-two to thirty-eight (and ones that showed people's faces were slashed from twenty-one to six). The museum also decided to cancel its request for artifacts from the two destroyed cities, such as a child's half-burned lunch box, an infant's dress, and several items from a girls' high school. The Nagasaki bomb, which had exploded directly over Japan's largest Catholic parish, included two Christian religious items—a partially melted rosary and a statue of the Madonna and Child. The AFA protested inclusion of these items and the emphasis on injury to individual Japanese, especially women and children. In their critical phrasing, "most of the individual Japanese speakers are persons who suffered injury themselves or who were witnesses to carnage. They talk about pain and suffering. Visitors will take strong impressions with them as they leave." In other words, they argued that if visitors to the exhibit recognized the Japanese dead as fellow humans it would somehow erode the justice of America's war in the Pacific or dishonor its dead.

The museum was forced to delete well-researched scholarship on the decision to drop the bomb as well as material focusing attention on the suffering caused by that decision because private pressure groups and some members of Congress did not want to believe it or let the general public hear it.

The theme of the atomic bomb as the first stage of the nuclear era was eliminated completely, as is evident in the new title, The Last Act: The Atomic Bomb and the End of World War II. The revised exhibit did close with a final wall on the legacy of the bomb, but the concluding section had been transformed from a reference to the age of nuclear uncertainty to a focus on the Japanese surrender. The revised exhibit simply asserted that the bomb caused the Japanese surrender rather than the original plan to investigate this question. For example, the Soviet entry into the war was mentioned but not linked to the war's end.

5. Senate Resolution 257 of 19 September 1994, which is reproduced on p. 34 of this issue of the Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars.
The pictures of the damage to the cities did not concern the critics of the planned exhibit as much as those of human casualties. In revised versions of the exhibit, photos like these of victims were first cut from sixty-two to thirty-eight (with ones showing people's faces reduced from twenty-one to six), and then to none. The pictures on this page all show victims of the bombing of Nagasaki, the one on top by Yosuke Yamahata and the one below on the left taken on 10 August 1945, the day after the bombing, and the one below on the right taken later by the U.S. Army Signal Corps. Besides their complaint that the planned exhibit had a disproportionate quantity of pictures of Japanese as opposed to U.S. victims of the war, the critics of the exhibit apparently did not want to see images of Japanese suffering, have air warfare portrayed as anything but clean and powerful technology, or acknowledge that the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki began the horrors and uncertainties of the nuclear age.
This script had few friends. Revealingly, the veterans organizations and their allies in Congress were still not satisfied. They had already begun clamoring for punitive budget cuts to the museum and the firing of all the curators involved. They saw their opportunity to reopen those attacks when the fifth and final draft was released on 26 October 1994. It was much like the fourth one, except that the museum curators had included General George C. Marshall's estimate recorded by Admiral William Leahy in his diary on 18 June 1945 that total U.S. casualties (wounded and killed) were likely to be about 63,000 had the Allies invaded Kyushu in November 1945—one of the main alternatives to using the A-bomb. This estimate was far lower than the figure of 229,000 casualties announced by President Truman (and cited in the fourth draft). The lower numbers are far better supported in contemporary documents and historical research than are the higher ones, incidentally suggesting that to justify the bombs' use Truman and his advisors lied to the public in late 1945 about the likely numbers of war dead in an invasion. Indeed, independence evidence suggests they did just that.9

The Air Force Association argued that if visitors to the exhibit recognized the Japanese dead as fellow humans it would somehow erode the justice of America's war in the Pacific or dishonor its dead.

The AFA and the American Legion launched an even more vitriolic attack on this version, which proved to be the final blow to the Smithsonian's resolve. The museum curators were excoriated as un-American for including the lower estimates. William M. Detweiler, national commander of the American Legion, responded to the lower casualty estimates almost hysterically: "The hundreds of thousands of American boys whose lives were thus spared . . . are, by this exhibit, now to be told their lives were purchased at the price of treachery and revenge."10 On 24 January 1995 eighty-one members of Congress sent a letter to the secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, I. Michael Heyman, blasting the exhibit as still too willing to question the use of the bomb, demanding that Martin Harwit be fired, and promising a hostile investigation into the Smithsonian's funding.11

Meanwhile the revisions made so far had disturbed many professional historians and peace activists precisely because despite considerable troubling evidence to the contrary they so uncritically accepted the idea that the dropping of the bomb was both necessary and good. Moreover, the museum was being forced to delete well-researched scholarship on the decision to drop the bomb as well as material focusing attention on the suffering caused by that decision because private pressure groups and some members of Congress did not want to believe it or let the general public hear it. Supporters were also horrified by the virulence of the attack on the museum curators and the paltry support the museum received from the public and the media. For many the most important issue was no longer the depiction of the end of the war in 1945, but the censoring of history and public debate in 1995.

On 16 November 1994 sixty-two historians sent Michael Heyman a letter protesting the decision to change the exhibit. They criticized the removal of both the artifacts from Nagasaki and Hiroshima and the 1945 debate over the wisdom or necessity of dropping the bomb. "The existence of that debate is a historical fact, and the statement of that fact was removed from the planned exhibit in response to political pressure." They acidly commented that "the Smithsonian is taking fastidious care to make sure that each bolt, each gauge and detail of the Enola Gay is a perfect reflection of the true artifact. This stands in extraordinary contrast to the disregard of historical documents and the scholarly literature on the atomic bombings." They concluded that the exhibit demanded by the veterans organizations "utterly fails" to "portray history in the proper context of the times" as required by the Senate resolution. The following day eight academics sent a similar, more detailed, letter directly to Martin Harwit. It stressed the same themes plus an argument that the exhibit should include evidence not only that Japan was near surrender by early August, but that Truman and his advisors had knowledge of that fact. The academics felt that these arguments should be included together with statements urging the use of the bomb to "accurately indicate the range of the debate." They also demanded that the exhibit "revise the impression that Hiroshima and its civilian inhabitants constituted a legitimate and primarily military target," and restore the pictorial and verbal testimony to the human suffering caused by the bomb.12

Bowing to pressure from Congress and the veterans organizations, on 30 January 1995 the Board of Regents of the

The Smithsonian's Enola Gay exhibit that opened to the public on 28 June 1995 had been reduced to include little more than the front half of the Enola Gay fuselage and information about the airplane and the crew that flew the bombing mission. The planned exhibit had been totally eviscerated in spite of the fact that the curators had tried to respond to the criticisms of the Air Force Association, the American Legion, and their allies in four successive drafts. The curators had added a new section on the earlier stages of the Pacific War that emphasized U.S. casualties and the valor of U.S. soldiers, reframed the presentation of kamikaze pilots, and modified earlier themes such as the debate over the necessity of dropping the bombs, the role of racism, the effects of the bombs on the ground, and the dawn of the nuclear age. In the end all these important issues were eliminated, and the exhibit as it stands is impressive mainly for the issues it fails to address. This 1995 photo of the centerpiece of the exhibit—the front half of the Enola Gay fuselage—is by Jay Mallin, Impact Visuals.

Smithsonian announced that the exhibit would be reduced to include only the front half of the Enola Gay, a plaque, and a video on the crew that flew the bombing missions.14 The eviscerated presentation opened to the public in June 1995.

Disturbingly, many media accounts of the controversy cooperated in the attack on the Smithsonian. The Washington Post not only attacked the content of the exhibit but also the non-U.S. origins of two of the curators, for example stressing that Michael Neufeld was in college in Canada "when Americans were fleeing to Canada to escape the Vietnam War."15 By far the most informative, balanced media accounts of the subject I myself have read are both in Japanese, one by a senior journalist, Saito Michio (see n. 21 below) and the other by Sodei Rinjiro, "Genbaku toka no rekishi to seiji" (Dropping an atomic bomb on history and politics), in Sekai, no. 605 (Feb. 1995), pp. 13-41. Those two articles are not only more evenhanded than anything available to date in English, but they both also tackle the question of why the controversy was so heated. They come to similar conclusions—that the Smithsonian challenged the widely held ideas that World War II was in every particular a "just" and "good war," that dropping the bomb was the great decision of Truman's lifetime, and that the two bombs hastened the end of the war and saved U.S. lives. Sodei and Saito end their articles with the same question—how are the people of Hiroshima and Nagasaki to interpret U.S. refusal to even consider their suffering?

The Contexts of the Battle

Why did this fifty-year-old debate burst into such a nasty confrontation? Most of the facts under discussion had long been part of the public record. Indeed, the veterans organizations rarely argued that any aspect of the proposed exhibit was factually inaccurate, merely that the tone of presentation was unpatriotic. Even when debate was over precise numbers, no one disagreed that more recently declassified documents differed significantly from other ones available earlier. Moreover, the first three sections of the first script focused overwhelmingly on U.S. determination and valor. Rather than assuming honesty and

15. Ken Ringle, Washington Post, 26 Sept. 1994. Ringle not only attacked the content of the exhibit but falsely claimed that it was developed in secrecy.
Although the Smithsonian succumbed to pressures from critics supported by the Senate and much of the news media, on opening day demonstrating members of the public briefly restored some of the elements that had been eliminated from the Enola Gay exhibit. As Hiroshima survivor Yasui Kouichi stood in front of the museum presentation of the crew of the Enola Gay, he provided the missing human dimension of the dropping of the bomb from the perspective of the victims. This photo is by and courtesy of Ed Hedemann of the War Resisters League.

patriotism, however, the AFA and their allies set out to silence and punish the museum curators. (The third section was praised even by the harshest critics as respectful of veterans, but then was often treated as a lucky fluke rather than evidence of good will). They accused the Smithsonian, a national institution, of betraying the public trust because it openly recognized that Americans have never felt entirely comfortable about the use of the bomb. Facing that unease means doubting the infallibility of U.S. leaders, especially military leaders. It is this that is being branded as somehow un-American. Eerily, such attitudes evoke far more powerfully the mentality of Japanese society during the war than that of the antifascist Allied commitment to freedom and democracy.

The struggle was far more over defining acceptable and unacceptable contexts for thinking about the bomb than it was about facts. The museum curators wanted to include the terrible sufferings of the bombed as an inescapable part of the story. The Air Force Association and the American Legion criticized this approach as an inappropriate way to contextualize the 1945 bombings because they saw the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor, the Nanjing Massacre, and the atrocious treatment of POWs during World War II as the only salient frame of interpretation. The veterans organizations also vetoed the original plan for the Smithsonian exhibit to include the postwar legacies of the bomb, such as the nuclear arms race and international anxieties about nuclear destruction. Their main argument for these rules was that to rethink the decisions made in 1945 in any way was to dishonor veterans. But to analyze is not to withhold respect.

Michael Sherry, Edward Linenthal, and Yui Daizaburo all note in their articles in this issue that the critics of the Enola Gay exhibit directed much of their vitriol at recent cultural...
domestic politics concerning multiculturalism, the military, and war memorials; they often seemed far more upset over those issues than the international context of 1945. This concern for what Sherry calls issues of "citizenship rather than marksmanship" means that charges that the Air and Space Museum was "politicizing the past" were, if not disingenuous, then certainly lacking in self-reflection. To take the most explosive example, surely recognizing that racism was ever-present in 1940s America is partly an opportunity to celebrate the distance we have moved from those days. Not only has the U.S. military abandoned its Jim Crow organization, but in 1988 the U.S. government formally apologized to the thousands of Japanese-Americans who were incarcerated on the basis of race in 1942. The AFA's discomfort with any reflection on those past wrongs speaks volumes about the continuing relevance of race in U.S. society—and the military—today.

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In addition to the 1993 debate on gays in the military and clashes over earlier war memorials such as at Pearl Harbor, memories of the Vietnam War and its commemoration loom very large as the context for the Enola Gay battle. Simply treating the end of World War II as problematic and dropping the bomb as unfinished business is reminiscent of the way Americans have treated the conflict in Vietnam. As Robin Wagner-Pacifici and Barry Schwartz put it, "Victories, after all, are to be celebrated; defeats are to be explained . . . ". That associative link does challenge the glory, justness, and unity of purpose among Americans in 1945. Indeed, it reminds us of veterans who hated their war, saw little point in their assignments, and were not regarded as heroes when they returned home. So far, only Vietnam has been remembered formally this way. The AFA and the American Legion members—many veterans of the Korean and Vietnamese conflicts rather than the earlier one—did not want to pursue the parallel. The same groups had bitterly fought against the non-heroic Vietnam Veterans Memorial, dedicated in 1982. That memorial has been a great popular success precisely because it managed to find something to commemorate while still recognizing that the Vietnam War was "controversial, morally questionable, and unsuccessful." The Smithsonian exhibit could have played a similarly valuable role in helping Americans celebrate the heroic aspects of World War II without feeling compelled to swallow whole either the memory of racist policies at home or the grotesque scenes of hell in Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

The exhibit's cancellation is a profound missed opportunity—and one that will extend beyond the National Air and Space Museum as other museums, libraries, and scholars will feel endangered as well. It seems likely that the sheer nastiness of the attack on the curators will cause other museums to withdraw plans for exhibits on powerful subjects.

The Moral Dilemma

Interestingly, the problem of whether or not dropping the bomb was justified simply does not go away. That lingering unease, which Saito Michio calls "the ghost that haunts Americans," was the intellectual starting point for the proposed exhibit; the curators decided to show the atomic bombings precisely because "the question of whether it was necessary and right to drop the bombs continues to perplex us." The battle was thus over defining acceptable U.S. memory of the war and its end. The critics of the original exhibit were determined to enshrine justifications for the use of the bomb


19. George Mosse argues that what is celebrated in war is not just glory but also purposefulness and a sense of commonality among the soldiers and the citizens of a nation, including the fiction that there is unity among leaders. George Mosse, Fallen Soldiers: Reshaping the Memory of the World Wars (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), pp. 23–25.

20. The formal elements they particularly disliked included its horizontal axis, its placement below ground level, the focus on the individual participants who died rather than the cause itself, and the lack of memorial buildings and realistic statues of fighting men. Veterans groups also insisted on adding a national flag and statues of soldiers to the memorial in order to emphasize the idea that "there is a nobility inherent in serving and dying for one's country." They prevailed because Interior Secretary James Watt demanded these changes as a condition for his approval of the memorial site. This is a little-noted political antecedent to the current controversy. Wagner-Pacifici and Schwartz, "The Vietnam Veterans Memorial," quotes from pp. 381–82 and 396.


17. The AFA made much of other Smithsonian exhibits that they saw as disgraceful, especially a previous exhibit at Air and Space that emphasized the carnage of the first World War despite the use of air power. It went on to attack previous exhibits mounted elsewhere in the Smithsonian on the internment of Japanese-Americans during the war, the destruction caused by Christopher Columbus and his followers in the New World, and the seamier aspects of the American West in the frontier era. Again, these were not criticized on the grounds that they were untrue. Rather, they were objectionable because they squarely faced less savory aspects of the nation and the world's past (and followed the "theories of Michael Sherry"). Correll, "War Stories at Air and Space," p. 27, AFA report, p. 6.
and create a happier U.S. memory of that event. Their specific demands fell into three categories: changes that (1) suggested the atomic bombs were not so terrible or so new a form of destruction, (2) supported the link between dropping the bomb and the war’s end, including suppressing evidence, and (3) tacitly acknowledged the unprecedented power of the bomb, but suggested that such a high level of destructiveness was required to stop the special, vicious Japanese enemy.

The first huge skirmish occurred when the AFA lobbied hard to censor photographs of the effects of the bomb, especially on human beings—in effect, suggesting that the atomic bombings were not so important or monstrous in themselves as to be worth such careful scrutiny. They were following in a long tradition. As Lane Fenrich shows in his article in this issue, images of the atomic bombings have been carefully censored and controlled since 1945. In particular the U.S. government censored information on the effects of the bomb on human bodies both in the United States and in Japan long after 1945. The Atomic Bombing Casualty Commission scientists were very secretive about radiation sickness and cancer, although for their research they collected the bodies of Japanese who died, prompting Kurihara Sadako to call them “ABCC vultures.” Later much information remained classified—and is still appearing, including a steady trickle of information on government-sanctioned experimentation on unwitting American subjects. In the Smithsonian debate, critics of the exhibit simply refused to even look at the evidence of the bomb’s devastation. As a Japanese observer put it, they were unwilling to consider the bomb from any perspective other than a height of 30,000 feet. In that spirit, photos of the hibakusha themselves, rather than of the physical environment of their cities, were dropped from the exhibit.

The Air and Space Museum curators were most viciously attacked for their attention to the human tragedy of the bomb. Their recognition of the great numbers of those deaths, the power of the blast, and the lingering effects of radiation sickness and cancer was excoriated as unpatriotic and essentially a fifth columnist continuation of the war itself. They were also attacked for personalizing the victims and showing too many photos of women and children. Maruki Iri and Maruki Toshi, who have painted a series of fourteen huge murals depicting the people of Hiroshima just after the bomb fell, paint only people’s bodies and their natural surroundings. Maruki Iri has explained their decision to leave out architectural markers from their paintings: “The atomic bomb isn’t a matter of buildings. Unless you paint people, it’s not the atomic bomb. Unless you paint the condition of the people, it’s not the atomic bomb.” It is profoundly

As originally planned, the Enola Gay exhibit stressed the awesome destructive power of the single atomic bomb from a single plane and the lingering effects of radiation sickness, but the exhibit’s section on the conventional bombing of Japan dealt with another great horror of World War II as well: the acceptance and prevalence of indiscriminate bombing of civilians. The Allied bombing of Dresden and Tokyo easily matched the Axis bombing of London and Chongqing, and it has been estimated that 300,000 or more people were killed during the firebombing of Japan’s major cities. This picture shows a Japanese family eating a meal in the midst of the ruins after the firebombing of Yokohama.

disturbing that the most controversial aspect of the curators' plan was their attempt "to put visitors on the ground during the atomic bombing of the two cities" and courageously face the Marukis' challenge to look at that essential meaning of the bomb.\(^{23}\)

Many scholars downplay the horror of the atomic bomb in order to stress an earlier historic shift in "civilized" behavior during the World War II years: the acceptance of indiscriminate bombing of civilians. Considered the height of barbarism in 1937 when Franco bombed Guernica and Japan bombed Shanghai, such bombing had become commonplace by 1945. London and Chongqing were matched by Dresden and Tokyo, where the destruction and loss of life neared the devastation of the atomic bombs. That blurring of the line between soldier and noncombatant is an enduring legacy of "the good war," reappearing as recently as the Persian Gulf War and the siege of Sarajevo in the 1990s. Mayor Motoshima Hitoshi of Nagasaki called attention to the loss of that distinction as the great horror of World War II, as have many scholars, notably Michael Sherry. The exhibit incorporated this critique through a section on conventional bombing of Japan, but chose to stress what was different about Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Even though the willingness to slaughter thousands of noncombatants may be even more significant than the first use of nuclear weapons, the exhibit stressed the awesome destructive power of the single bomb from a single plane and the lingering effects of radiation sickness. As a video in the proposed exhibit was to explain, in Hiroshima many people who thought they were spared succumbed to the local "cancer wave of the 1950s." Finally, as the original exhibit script also noted, atomic weapons threatened global extinction in a way that earlier weapons never had. Discussing that link between possible future war and U.S. actions in 1945 was strictly taboo.

The precise relationship between the use of the bomb and Japan's unconditional surrender a week later has been much studied over the decades. It is possible to celebrate the bombs as the triumph of advanced technology (the only theme to survive in the final version of the exhibit), but otherwise the real event commemorated is the end of the war. We cannot actually elide the two events. We may hope that the bomb hastened the war's end, but the historical evidence for this is conflicting. Certainly a great many U.S. soldiers in the Pacific in 1945 believed the bomb brought the war to a speedy end, but they were not in a position to know. The role of the bomb in encouraging surrender is essentially an unanswered factual question: the Japanese high command was divided on this point and it is not clear precisely what tipped the balance. Some influential figures were determined to fight on even after 9 August, while others had begun looking for ways to surrender weeks earlier. The general population was demoralized, armed only with bamboo sticks, and unimaginably war weary. On the other hand, the military used Korean slave labor to build a network of secret tunnels and had sketchy plans to fight on from there.\(^{24}\) The war also continued unabated after the incineration of Hiroshima, with one of the biggest conventional bombing raids on Tokyo occurring after 9 August. These facts, along with Stalin's declaration of war against Japan on 8 August, mean that even if we pinpoint the timing of the Japanese surrender decision, it is still hard to know its exact cause. Moreover, even if Japanese leaders were determined to fanatically sacrifice all Japanese lives to the war, bombing two civilian targets far from Tokyo and the high command may have only strengthened their resolve while deepening the suffering of ordinary Japanese. Japanese historians may be able to tell us the answer eventually. Americans should support their efforts to open official archives and reconstruct the actual surrender decision. Careful scholarship, if respected, can move us beyond assertion and counterassertion here.

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How are the people of Hiroshima and Nagasaki to interpret U.S. refusal to even consider their suffering?

The veterans groups demanded that all evidence be suppressed that cast doubt on the tight link between the use of the bomb and the end of the war. The specific disputes over the exhibit content were mainly over material that raised such possibilities. The curators were forced to drop evidence that some U.S. leaders thought the Japanese government was on the verge of surrender after months of conventional bombing and thus invasion of the home islands was unnecessary even without the bomb. They also deleted debate on whether the Japanese would have surrendered in July if the Allies had guaranteed a continued high status for the emperor, terms that were granted after 9 August. They also cut out comments that the decision to drop the bomb was influenced by anti-Soviet diplomacy or a need to justify the costs of development. The critics objected to evidence that private estimates of the human cost of such an invasion were much lower than public ones. Finally, they insisted that the negative consequences of opening the atomic era are far more obvious in hindsight than they were in 1945, despite ample evidence from that era to the contrary. This logic took the Senate to the conclusion that nuclear destruction of two cities and their inhabitants was "merciful."

The final focal point of contention was over depictions of Japanese viciousness earlier in the war. There had been some material on this subject in the first draft, but the veterans organizations demanded more. From the perspectives of historian and teacher, the expanded coverage of the Pacific War from 1941 to spring 1945 was the most satisfying of all the revisions. More information on that long and harrowing conflict would have enriched the exhibit. The new material included greater coverage of atrocities such as at Nanjing in 1937 or the Bataan Death March, but the critics' concern seemed less to commemorate the

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slaughtered citizens of Nanjing than to use that abominable act to paint the Japanese as uniquely brutal and so to vindicate the United States for dropping the bombs. (Although missing both from the Smithsonian exhibit and this set of articles, Asian testimony about life under Japanese military rule could provide an important part of the story of the end of the Pacific War.) Truman himself crafted this justification in his famous statements that the Japanese had “abandoned all pretense of obeying international laws of warfare,” and more baldly, “when you have to deal with a beast, you have to treat him as a beast.”

While Japanese society as a whole and the military in particular were shockingly callous about human suffering and human rights in the 1930s and 1940s, Germans too became inured to other people’s pain—in a process George Mosse has called the “brutalization of German politics.” Nor does the news out of Bosnia suggest that such inhumanity is a relic of the 1940s. The American Legion and AFA leadership feared that to discuss Japanese World War II atrocities as anything other than uniquely evil was to condone them, just as they feared that to publicly recognize U.S. racism in this and other Smithsoni exhibits meant seeing the Axis and Allies as morally equivalent. Their focus on national culture as politics in both Japan and the United States obscured other ways of comparing and contrasting, such as the treatment of detained groups during the war. Certainly Japanese-Americans interned in the United States were not starved, beaten, and killed as were prisoners of the Japanese, but because of their race they were wrenched from their homes, deprived of liberty, and often separated from family members. Their treatment seems neither equivalent to that of the POWs nor moral.

The exhibit did struggle with the problem of humanizing the Japanese without justifying their war. The first draft did not omit all references to Japanese atrocities, as one might think from the AFA charges or media descriptions. Perhaps the single most controversial sentences in the January 1994 script (later removed) were the following: “For most Americans, this war was fundamentally different from the one waged against Germany and Italy—it was a war of vengeance. For most Japanese, it was a war to defend their unique culture against Western imperialism.” These two lines were quoted extensively (and sometimes inaccurately) in the attacks and the media accounts. Indeed, if these two sentences had stood alone, they could have been read as a justification for Japan’s war. Nonetheless, it is hard to honestly conclude that the curators intended them that way, given the context of the entire first script. The Japanese journalist Saito, who was consulted by Harwit early on, wrote that he was troubled by these lines both because he thought they would inflame U.S. opinion and because he thought they were too uncritical of the official Japanese point of view. “However,” he went on to say, “when I had read the whole thing, I no longer had that impression. That was because the planning document denounced the invasion of China, expansionism, and Japan’s many ‘extreme atrocities,’ beginning with the Nanjing Massacre and the infamous human experiments, all very critically.”

Chinese memories of World War II are just as diverse and contradictory as U.S. ones. Some Japanese are utterly unpentant, such as the Association of Bereaved Families discussed here by Yui Daizaburo and Ellen Hammond, as are the officers who oversaw the building of the Burma-Thai railroad, one of the cruelest episodes of the war. Gavan McCormack has described their annual gathering around the train engine preserved at Japan’s memorial to militarism, the Yasukuni Shrine, where they celebrate their great patriotic effort without thought to the terrible cost in lives of POWs and local Southeast Asian forced laborers. Their perspective is disturbingly parallel to the celebration of the technical achievement of delivering the Enola Gay’s payload at Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

But not all Japanese celebrate their nation’s wartime past. Some have begun to confront their own deeds during World War II, as Yui discusses. In the last few years, aging veterans have spoken up much more freely, and scholars have pursued...
The veterans organizations demanded that the planned Enola Gay exhibit include more depictions of Japan’s viciousness than it did, and in the subsequent drafts this was done in expanded coverage of the Pacific War from 1941 to 1945. Typical of that period, these prisoners of war, aged nineteen to twenty-three, were classified by the Japanese as fit for the heavy labor of building the Burma-Thai railroad line. Fellow prisoner George Aspinall took this picture with a secret camera and kept the film hidden till liberation. The picture is credited to Tim Bowden in Gavan Daws’s Prisoners of the Japanese: POWs of World War II in the Pacific (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1994), a book considered by some “the only proper memorial to the estimated 140,000 POWs and 140,000 civilians” who suffered under the Japanese during the Pacific War. This photo is reprinted here with the permission of Tim Bowden.

previously neglected research into such subjects as Asian forced laborers; the “military comfort women,” who endured daily gang-rape by the Japanese Army; gruesome quasi-medical experiments on human beings; and chemical and biological warfare. Sometimes these researchers turn up information that should be disturbing to Americans as well; for example, few knew of the human experiments because the information was reclassified after the war and the perpetrators protected by U.S. government officials, who wanted the experimental results for themselves.30

The three Japanese authors published here are among a distinguished group of Japanese who have carefully distanced themselves from both Japanese wartime actions and the use of the atomic bomb. Yui Daizaburo, Sodei Rinjiro, and Kurihara Sadako have all spoken publicly against Japanese depredations in World War II, including the attack on Pearl Harbor. Yui and Sodei have also both signed the Appeal for World Peace, reprinted here, which carefully lays out a position calling for the Japanese government to acknowledge that it was the main aggressor in the Pacific, apologize to both Asian and Allied nations for its actions during the war, and compensate war victims. All three have combined that critique with a strong antinuclear stand. Nagasaki mayor Motoshima Hitoshi disassociated himself from both Japanese and U.S. militarism in a joint conference with the mayor of Hiroshima, after announcing that they would send a traveling exhibit of artifacts from 1945 to the United States even if the artifacts could not be housed at the Smithsonian’s Enola Gay exhibit. On that occasion and others he criticized both Japan’s savagery in Asia and at Pearl Harbor as well as the atomic bombings.31

The U.S. critics who worry that the shape of the debate here can support justification in Japan today for official wartime actions are thus right that what happens here does affect what happens there. But they are wrong about how that process works. The more Americans treat Japanese life as worthless and insist on the bomb as necessary, the more it gives credence to the most right-wing groups in Japan, and ignores very mainstream Japanese opinions such as those of Hiraoka Takashi, the mayor of Hiroshima. At the press conference mentioned earlier, he commented that the purpose of his trip together with the artifacts was


that sense, it is the AFA and the American Legion that are most common humanity made Truman's decision that much easier. In can survive. Every time Americans insist that manner, the inhumanity of nuclear arms so that the human race in danger of giving aid and comfort to the enemy. it confirms Japanese suspicions that racist indifference to their common humanity made Truman's decision that much easier. In that sense, it is the AFA and the American Legion that are most in danger of giving aid and comfort to the enemy. The variety of Japanese attitudes toward the atomic bombings nicely indicates the way remembering and commemorating the war feeds both pacifist and nationalist hungers in Japan. James H. Foard reports not only an enormous variety of ritual surrounding commemoration of the bomb victims, but also conflicting elements among them. The central conflict is among those who want to remember the A-bomb victims as part of the universal human family, those who see them as late martyrs to Japan's national struggle, and those who want to recall them as individual parents, siblings, and friends. Thus, one set of commemorative rituals stresses world peace and nuclear disarmament. Foard writes that "this sense of the dead not yet at rest is strong in Hiroshima, a kind of indefinite liminality that disturbs the living, as symbolized by the 'eternal' flame that will burn, not necessarily eternally, but until all nuclear weapons are abolished." The memories of those who died in 1945 in Hiroshima are thus just as central to commemorative thinking as are the U.S. Marines who died in Iwo Jima for the American Legion or the old soldiers remembered by Yui's Japanese veterans. Nonetheless, their uneasy presence is imagined as a force for disarmament rather than for refighting the same war. That pacifist Hiroshima vision also self-consciously transcends the battle lines of the Asia-Pacific War. The folded paper crane, a traditional symbol of longevity and good fortune, has been merged with the Western dove to become the special symbol of peace for both Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

That explicitly internationalist stance predominates over the more nationalist one of commemorating Hiroshima (and Nagasaki) as the precise site where Japan became the only nation to experience a nuclear bomb. The survivors themselves, the city officials, and the general public would rather identify Hiroshima symbolically as part of the world than Japan. At the same time, by focusing on individuals on the one hand and abstract world peace on the other, commemorators at Hiroshima and Nagasaki have avoided situating the bombings within World War II. Until recently, the museums in the two cities did not discuss events leading up to the bombing and so did not take on the issue of Japanese national responsibility for the war or Japanese brutality in Asia at all. In that sense, they mirrored the final, truncated Smithsonian exhibit.

In the end, the Smithsonian exhibit's censors have encouraged those Japanese who are most nostalgic for their Imperial past in a more profound way than the curators ever could have. Their celebration of state violence, silencing of critics as unpatriotic, willingness to justify unimaginable human suffering, and insistence that military decisions cannot be questioned after the fact can only move us closer to a world disturbingly like that of presurrender Japan. Free expression of ideas and political differences was one of the main things Americans fought for in World War II, and something postwar Japanese have genuinely cherished. Claiming allegiance to human behavior above mindless patriotism honors the ideals of the Allied War in the Pacific and the soldiers who fought there far more than do the actions of those who claim to be their champions.

The Statue of the Children of the A-Bomb, dedicated to the memory of the children who died from the atomic bombing. This statue was inspired by Sasaki Sadako, who died of leukemia when she was twelve after experiencing the atomic bombing of Hiroshima ten years earlier. When she was very sick Sadako had folded paper cranes—cranes are a traditional Japanese symbol of longevity and good fortune—to keep up her spirits with the idea that if she folded a thousand she would get well. Today at the base of this statue in the Hiroshima Peace Park there are a million paper cranes sent from various places in Japan and such countries as Australia, New Zealand, Germany, Canada, and the United States. The emphasis here is obviously not on the battle lines of the Pacific War and the victims as Japanese, but on them as representatives of all humanity, with children holding the future of the world in their hands. The world has indeed found a new symbol of peace—the paper crane. This picture is by Pam Hasegawa, Impact Visuals.

"not to accuse the United States, but to show people, in a calm manner, the inhumanity of nuclear arms so that the human race can survive." Every time Americans insist that bushido, innate in every Japanese, impels them to fanatic and violent behavior, it confirms Japanese suspicions that racist indifference to their common humanity made Truman's decision that much easier. In that sense, it is the AFA and the American Legion that are most in danger of giving aid and comfort to the enemy.

The variety of Japanese attitudes toward the atomic bombings nicely indicates the way remembering and commemorating

Between History and Memory: The *Enola Gay* Controversy at the National Air and Space Museum

by Edward T. Linenthal*

The National Air and Space Museum has been bitterly attacked for its ill-fated exhibit, *The Last Act: The Atomic Bomb and the End of World War II*, originally scheduled to open in May 1995 with the restored fuselage of the *Enola Gay* on display. The exhibit, critics argued, failed to provide the crucial context for the use of the bomb: the horrors of combat in the Pacific. The curators were accused of practicing "revisionist" history by portraying the Japanese as merely victims of nuclear attacks by vengeful Americans through photographs of victims of the bomb, particularly women and children. There was no place in this exhibit, argued critics, for "Monday morning quarterbacking" about the decision to drop the bomb. Nor did they think it appropriate to discuss the postwar legacy of the nuclear arms race. Critics charged that the Smithsonian had created an offensive exhibit that insulted World War II veterans.

In their eagerness to demonize the Smithsonian, critics have obscured a central issue: the inevitable tension between the commemorative voice and the historical voice. The commemorative voice is personal and intimate. It says, "I was there, I know what happened, because I saw it and felt it." It is a voice that speaks with the authority of the witness. The historical voice is more impersonal and studious. It seeks to discern motives, understand actions, and discuss consequences that were impossible to analyze during the event itself. To witnesses it is a voice that can feel condescending even when no condescension is intended.

Moreover, *The Last Act* was caught between two quite different but intimately related historical narratives, each with a distinct commemorative message. One story focused on the use of the bomb as an event that ended the horror of the Pacific War, saving untold numbers of American and Japanese lives. The commemorative message for that story centered on U.S. veterans and was "remember what we did and what we sacrificed." The other story "froze" an event considered—much like the Holocaust—as a turning point in world history, and considered the Pacific War as a prelude to the atomic bomb and the legacy of the nuclear age. The commemorative message for this story was "never again." This narrative focused less on the suffering of Americans and their allies in the Pacific War than on illustrating what the bomb did—and here photographs of Japanese victims stood more as the first victims of the nuclear age than as casualties of World War II, a graphic reminder of the enduring nuclear danger. Both narratives are dependent on the commemorative voice, but they commemorate different losses.

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Both of these voices are crucial to the shaping of public history. The personal voice allows museum visitors to touch the past in unique ways. The historical voice is crucial as well, for the impact of events such as the Holocaust or the use of atomic weapons is more than the sum of personal experiences.

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Tensions between these two narratives, characterized by John Dower as the "heroic" and the "tragic," were heightened due to the timing of the exhibit, due to open during ceremonies commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the end of the war. Such anniversaries are periods of "intense remembering," the last major commemorative events in which witnesses will be able to impart their deeply felt truths to subsequent generations. Both narratives also resisted the less ardent historical voice. The voice of the historian—occasionally challenging these deeply felt truths—is often perceived as "stealing" history from its guardians, the witnesses.

The struggle for ownership of history has been particularly evident in controversies over the USS *Arizona* Memorial in Pearl Harbor and the creation of the United States Holocaust Museum.

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*This article appeared previously in a slightly different form in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* and was reprinted with slight modifications in a museum publication called *The Exhibitionist*. A somewhat similar article will be appearing in the *Religious Studies Review*.
The USS Arizona as it appeared on 10 December 1941 after all the fires had been put out. The USS Arizona was one of the twenty-one U.S. ships hit during the surprise Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in Honolulu, Hawai'i, on 7 December 1941. Over half of the more than two thousand Americans killed in the attack were on the USS Arizona, and most of the bodies remain entombed on the ship. Although other U.S. ships—including five other battleships—and three hundred U.S. aircraft were also destroyed or badly damaged in the attack, it was the USS Arizona that became the World War II symbol of America at war.

The USS Arizona Memorial was completed in 1962 as a “tribute to the men whose last resting place has become a symbol for all who fell on December 7, 1941.” The memorial building straddles but does not touch the sunken ship, and it includes views of both the ship and the names of the 1,177 men who died on it. Like the curators of the Enola Gay exhibit at the Smithsonian, the National Park Service caring for the USS Arizona Memorial has been accused of being revisionist, unpatriotic, and too sympathetic to the Japanese, but it has proved itself capable of balancing the historical voice with the commemorative. These photos are from and courtesy of the USS Arizona Memorial N.P.S. Collection and appear, along with the caption information, in Edward Linenthal’s Sacred Ground: Americans and Their Battlefields, 2nd edition (Urbana and Chicago, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1993).

Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C. There have been longstanding criticisms of the National Park Service (NPS)’s stewardship of the USS Arizona Memorial. The NPS, some argued, failed to maintain a pure commemorative environment for the USS Arizona—which functions as historic artifact, shrine, and tomb—by allowing Japanese cars in the parking lot, selling items made in Japan in the gift shop, and permitting “disrespectful” Japanese tourists. Veterans groups protested loudly when plans were made for the return of Ha. 19, a Japanese minisubmarine captured in the battle, and protested again when plans were made to display a Japanese airman’s uniform in the visitor center museum. NPS responded in the historical voice: the submarine was the first U.S. trophy of war, and the airman’s uniform would put a “face” on the enemy. This moderated but did not halt criticism.

There was opposition to museum labels that seemed to violate commemorative sensibilities. For example, Admiral Husband E. Kimmel, the commander in chief of the Pacific Fleet in 1941, described the attack as a “beautifully executed military maneuver.” Objections to his words appearing in the visitor center museum—altogether too close to the memorial itself, one critic argued—resulted in their removal. Criticism came to a head before the fiftieth anniversary ceremonies in December 1991. The visitor center film—produced, ironically, by the U.S. Navy—was deemed by many too sympathetic to the Japanese. Park Service rangers were accused of delivering “revisionist” programs, and the Park Service was accused of being unpatriotic, unworthy of caring for a national shrine. These angry criticisms all but stopped after the Park Service’s four days of moving commemorative ceremonies...
A German concentration camp after U.S. liberation. At the controversial United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C. visitors are presented with the image of Americans as liberators and the information that due to prewar anti-Semitism in the State Department Jewish immigrants were sent back to their likely deaths in Europe. In contrast to the Enola Gay exhibit, at the Holocaust museum visitors are trusted with a multisided story, and both the commemorative and historical points of view are represented even though the museum was conceived as a memorial. This picture is from and reprinted with the permission of the Yad Vashem Museum in Jerusalem, Israel.

demonstrated its ability to balance the commemorative and historical voice at this volatile place of memory.

For Holocaust survivors involved in the creation of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, the entire institution was perceived as a memorial, their way of paying respects in an enduring manner to those reduced to ashes in the gas chambers. The museum also has clearly delineated commemorative space—the Hall of Remembrance—and historical space, the permanent exhibition in the Hall of Witness. Survivors have occasionally clashed with historians. There were long and spirited debates over whether women's hair, brought to the museum from Auschwitz, should be displayed. Those who spoke with the historical voice argued in favor, believing that the hair would dramatize an important dimension of the Holocaust, namely, that the Germans utilized the bodies of their victims to fuel the German war machine. (Hair was used as insulation in submarines and to make socks for the Wehrmacht.) Those who spoke with the commemorative voice argued against its use, believing that some survivors would be victimized again by seeing on public display something so intimate. In this case, the commemorative voice won out, and the hair was not put on display.

The heroic narrative with its commemorative message was the only politically acceptable one at the Smithsonian, and the boundaries of memory were so constricted that virtually any mention of the tragic narrative was seen as anti-American. After the American Legion was asked to help rewrite the script, almost all reference to the controversy regarding the decision to drop the bomb was erased, and numerous pictures of Japanese victims, particularly women and children, were removed. The revised script began by establishing the context important to veterans—the horror of the Pacific War—but virtually erased the postwar context of the nuclear age. Historians responded by denouncing what they viewed as the "historical cleansing" of an exhibit, arguing that while the Smithsonian was painstakingly restoring the Enola Gay, it was allowing history to be turned into propaganda. The result was that each side believed that the other had "stolen" history, resulting in either dishonoring U.S. veterans in a "revisionist" exhibit on the one hand, or in a callous disregard for historical integrity cloaked in calls for "balance" and "objectivity" on the other hand.

As history museums become more forums instead of temples, a balance must be struck between the historical and commemorative voices so that the ugliness of the controversy over The Last Act will not be repeated. The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum is a good example of a public institution that has incorporated both voices. Holocaust survivors and historians both played a significant role in decisions about the permanent exhibition. When it became clear that out of respect for survivors' sensibilities there had not been an adequate portrayal of Nazis "at work" murdering Jews—that, in effect, Jews were being murdered by an invisible evil—the exhibit was altered. And for many years there was a museum content committee, formed specifically to assure survivors that their voice would be heard as the exhibition took shape.

Both of these voices are crucial to the shaping of public history. The personal voice allows museum visitors to touch the
past in unique ways. The historical voice is crucial as well, for the impact of events such as the Holocaust or the use of atomic weapons is more than the sum of personal experiences. If historians need to respect a veteran who declares, "I know why the bomb was dropped. It saved my life. That's why it was dropped," veterans need to respect historians who immerse themselves in the historical record and say, "being part of an event does not privilege the personal voice to the exclusion of all others."

Without the personal, commemorative voice, history exhibits run the danger of being "books on the wall," with little to fire people's imaginations. Without the historical voice, such exhibits would become vulnerable to the seduction of personal memory and the principle of expediency that so often governs what nations choose to remember. The popularity of Ken Burns's documentary histories illustrates how both voices can be blended in powerful ways.

Even when both voices are balanced appropriately, controversy is inevitable when museum exhibits open cherished stories to diverse interpretation. Reaction to The Last Act is troubling in many respects, irrespective of legitimate criticisms about the script. Some critics have folded this exhibit into a broad reactionary, anti-intellectual attack, arguing, in effect, that the commemorative voice expresses history "objectively," and the voice of many historians is "revisionism." (Many of these "antirevisionist" critics, of course, are pleased that Russians are now revising their selective memory to belatedly confront their own atrocities in Asia.)

Equally troubling is the arrogance of certain members of Congress who have sought to regulate public memory by threatening to cut the Smithsonian's budget and hold congressional hearings on the exhibit unless it expressed the tenets of patriotic correctness. When museums are forced to shape exhibits to satisfy benefactors, the result will be propaganda. It is also a dangerous precedent when interest groups representing only one voice become the arbiter of public history. No single group should serve as the authoritative voice of a public exhibition.

Finally, a good deal of the criticism of this exhibit has revealed a contempt for the U.S. public's ability to reflect on complex stories in history museums. Just a few blocks from the Air and Space Museum, visitors to the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum learn that in addition to the comforting images of Americans as liberators, prewar anti-Semitism in the State Department kept immigrants from coming to America. They learn that the SS St. Louis was turned away from U.S. shores, and consequently many of its passengers died in the Holocaust. There, visitors are able to appreciate a complex story. Surely they could do the same at the Air and Space Museum.

Patriotic Orthodoxy and U.S. Decline

by Michael S. Sherry*

Debate over the National Air and Space Museum's Enola Gay exhibit revealed important changes in what can be called "patriotic orthodoxy" (a useful term in that it captures the sensibilities of certain forces, although its opponents were hardly "antipatriotic"). For self-proclaimed patriots—the Air Force Association (AFA), the American Legion, and their corporate and Congressional allies—cultural victory at home, not military power abroad, was the consuming goal.

The rigidity of patriotic orthodoxy revealed as much. Its adherents sought not just a voice in the exhibit, but total victory over its domestic foes, much like the total U.S. victory of 1945. As early as April 1994, the AFA's Air Force Magazine acknowledged what it called "major concessions to balance" by the museum in its revised script, but the AFA remained angry. Months later, after more museum concessions, AFA spokesman Jack Giese commented, "We welcome their changes, but they are by no means close to what we've asked for." Indeed, each concession emboldened veterans groups to demand more, finally including the resignation of Martin Harwit as the museum's director.

*Laura Hein and Lane Fenrich provided valuable advice on the substance of this article, while Edward T. Linenthal gave me useful leads and documents regarding the debate.

Accompanying their demands was an insistence that only veterans could divine the meaning of the atomic attacks. “All we want is for the museum to tell history the way it happened,” Giese declared, not how museum curators “thought it should have happened. We’re vets, we’ve actually been in the Cold War—they haven’t.” Giese’s demand echoed one rising since the mid-1970s and loudly made by, among others, Paul Fussell in the 1980s: the history of World War II belonged solely to those who fought it (although not all veterans did duty in World War II, as Giese’s phrasing acknowledged, and many of AFA’s political allies had done no military duty).

The backward and inward focus of patriotic culture, like the limits of its victory, can be exaggerated. Success in cultural struggles like this one also shapes the future: bearing down on defense policy, orienting how textbooks and the media teach Americans to think about both past and future, and strengthening the forces of political and cultural conservatism.

Patriotic orthodoxy also required the virtual silencing of views and voices once included within it. In 1945 military leaders had hardly been unanimous about either the wisdom or the necessity of using the atomic bomb on Japan’s cities. Army generals like George Marshall and Dwight Eisenhower had offered major reservations. So too had the navy’s admirals, generals like George Marshall and Dwight Eisenhower had offered major reservations. So too had the navy’s admirals, though hardly opposed to the bombs’ use, had nonetheless insisted that their campaign of firebombing was on the brink of ending the war anyway. While the views of such figures were recounted in some op-ed pieces, patriotic orthodoxy all but obliterated them (writing for the Air Force Magazine, John T. Correll noted such views only briefly and obliquely). The Enola Gay debate pitted “revisionist historians” against “veterans groups protecting their heritage,” the New York Times claimed (paraphrasing historian Barton Bernstein), but in truth veterans groups had drastically revised that “heritage” rather than receiving it as an unchanged bequest from 1945.

Indeed, new truths were invented to sustain it. According to one account of the museum fracas, for historians “the atomic bomb has acquired political and emotional baggage in the intervening half century” as “the opening event of the nuclear age” rather than the climax of World War II—a distinctly “academic view of history.” But in fact that view weighed heavily on scientists and policy makers in the summer of 1945, on the air force itself within weeks of Hiroshima, and on pundits assaying the meaning of the event. Indeed, for men like physicist Robert Oppenheimer, Secretary of War Henry Stimson, and air force general Henry (Hap) Arnold, the future implications of the bomb consumed more attention in 1945 than its consequences for Japan and the war’s end. It was veterans groups, not historians, who were adding new baggage to the events of 1945—and stripping them of the load they had once carried. Taking the invention of new truths to greater extremes, Paul Tibbets, the Enola Gay’s commander, now claimed that “the urgency of the situation demanded that we use the weapons first—before the technology could be used against us.” Apparently, unbeknown to anyone in 1945 or since, Japan was on the brink of developing its own bomb!

Defenders of patriotic orthodoxy also revealed their priorities by aiming their greatest animus and contempt at the Americans who planned or supported the museum’s exhibit. Triumphal and hostile sentiments toward Japan did appear—especially in indignation that the museum seemed to treat it as the United States’ moral equal—but as subordinate themes. The case against Japan was short and perfunctory compared to the lengthy, bitter denunciations of the museum, its curators and historians, and its director. Those attacking the museum wanted to force their view of the war not on the Japanese—taking little interest in what Japanese authorities now said about the use of the atomic bomb—but instead on fellow Americans. Nor did they link their views of 1945 closely to recent tensions between Japan and the United States, just as the once-common rhetoric of “trade war” generally receded in the mid-1990s. American virtue and victory were to be celebrated—that they were revealed in the defeat of Japan was a secondary matter.

The celebrants’ version of the United States’ military past was also detached from any coherent vision of its military future. Earlier moments of patriotic revival had made such a linkage tight and obvious. That was so on the eve of World War II, when films like Sergeant York got official endorsement as part of efforts to mobilize patriotic sentiment against the Axis powers. It was so in the 1950s, when the Iwo Jima memorial at the Arlington Cemetery was celebrated, and patriotic culture stressed the value of nuclear weapons against the communist menace. It was so again in the 1970s, when patriotic revitalization was closely tied to efforts to expand and update the United States’ nuclear arsenal. To be sure, in each such moment advocates of revitalization were also jockeying for cultural and political power at home, but that power 2. “Hiroshima: A Controversy that Refuses to Die,” New York Times, 31 Jan. 1995.


was at least plausibly linked to plans for exercising military might abroad. In the mid-1990s the link had all but disappeared. Gone, too, were widespread anxiety and ambition about nuclear weapons. Earlier controversies about remembrance of 1945 had been yoked to intense debate about what the United States and other nations might do with their nuclear arsenals. With the end of the Cold War—the end of both nuclear anxiety and a superpower enemy—debate about the bomb's use was stripped of its resonance with global problems.

Revealingly in that regard, the allies of veterans groups in Congress and other political circles charted no plausible course for using U.S. military power. Defense policy was a minor concern to ascendant Republicans like Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich; his “revolution” was to be carried out against domestic foes regarding domestic policy. Statements like the Republican's 1994 “Contract With America” did demand greater military spending and specific programs like a revived antimissile defense system. But this was a call to arms with no identified purpose—no particular enemies to fight or threats to counter, only vague talk that the world remained a troublesome place and that second-rate powers like Iraq or North Korea might pose a problem. Like preparedness advocates before World War I, those of the mid-1990s seemed “more interested in polishing the fire engines than finding the blaze.” In fact, their primary thrust was to carp at nearly every use of military power that President Bill Clinton pondered or tried—primarily, “peacekeeping” missions of various sorts—and to bemoan the actual or prospective loss of any U.S. lives in Clinton’s military operations. As the New York Times observed, the October 1993 firefight in Somalia that left eighteen U.S. soldiers dead “in many respects had a bigger impact on military thinking than the entire 1991 Persian Gulf War,” and that impact enhanced reluctance to deploy U.S. military power anywhere.

Championing that reluctance, the forces of patriotic orthodoxy also borrowed—largely unwittingly, one supposes—from the rhetoric and concerns of earlier antiair war culture. While anti-Vietnam War protest had embraced many themes, revulsion at the loss of U.S. life in a needless war was its most broadly sustained impulse. The response of patriotic forces to the Vietnam War Memorial in Washington, D.C. revealed how much they endorsed that impulse by the 1980s. By starkly naming the loss of U.S. life in a needless war, the memorial before its completion, conservative patriots embraced that meaning. Their role in the long prisoner of war (POW)-missing in action (MIA) controversy had a similar emphasis: however fanciful its premises, indignation that some U.S. citizens remained alive or unaccounted for in Vietnam, like Rambo’s cinematic fantasy of their rescue, valued the saving of U.S. lives above all else. By the same token, most patriots celebrated the Gulf War for its remarkably low death rate among Americans more than for any American geopolitical or moral gains abroad. Indeed, by the mid-1990s the saving of U.S. soldiers’ lives, rather than their expenditure in a valued cause, had become a mantra for nearly all U.S. politicians: the dramatic rescue from Bosnia of downed airman Scott O’Grady in June 1995 revealed what is “best” about Americans, insisted Bill Clinton; O’Grady should never have been in harm’s way in the first place, responded Republican leaders. That self-proclaimed patriots would stress the supreme priority of avoiding American deaths—when earlier they had touted the need to accept sacrifice and excoriated antiwar activists for presumed cowardice—was a striking development. It hardly set them up to entertain major use of U.S. force in the future—unless the scenario repeated the good fortune of the Gulf War, an anomalous conflict that forecast no pattern for the future.

The exponents of cultural purity seemed intent on entombing patriotic culture in museums—and making a museum of it—not on projecting it into the world. For them, the proper exhibit was to be a shrine to the past, not a beacon to the future.

The revulsion at U.S. casualties in the mid-1990s intersected precisely with the view of 1945 expressed by those attacking the Enola Gay exhibit. There were many ways to valorize the atomic bomb’s use—as an act that presumably ended a terrible war, punished a bestial foe, demonstrated U.S. might, arrested a prolonged Soviet role in the Pacific War, squeezed Stalin out of the occupation of Japan, and served notice to the Soviets about the United States’ postwar power. Barely noted or altogether brushed aside, those claims were subordinated to the insistence that above all the atomic bomb had saved U.S. lives. That is, contemporary patriots stressed for 1945 precisely the same theme they sounded for 1995—the necessity of avoiding U.S. deaths in war.

So the focal points of their fury revealed. They were outraged at historians’ claims that the Truman administration had not expected a half million casualties in an invasion of Japan, and that Japan’s surrender had been imminent in August anyway, making the question of casualty estimates moot. Indeed, it was over the issue of casualty estimates that the final breach occurred in January 1995, with the museum’s opponents insisting that historians’ revised estimates constituted the final insult warranting abandonment of the Enola Gay exhibit. The earlier focal point of opponents’ fury—the museum’s plans to display photographs and artifacts dramatizing the bombs’ carnage in Japan—was also linked to their emphasis on the saving of U.S. lives, since evidence of the carnage distracted from that emphasis and raised troublesome questions about what it cost to save those lives. Indicating how much numbers mattered in this regard, veterans’ spokesmen scrupulously counted the museum’s planned photographs, as

if each somehow diminished the value of the U.S. lives saved, and insisted on their removal. Their preferences also replicated those of 1945, when photographs of Japanese dead were few and those capturing U.S. technological supremacy—and the lives it saved—dominated U.S. visual culture. Insistence on the virtue of saving U.S. lives in 1945 was thus an old theme—but a singularly overriding one congruent with dominant views of the United States' military future in 1995.

If less about any vision of that future—beyond its risk-free nature—what was the priority of the exhibit's attackers? Primarily, to achieve victory over cultural and political foes at home. As Irving Kristol, one of their intellectual godfathers, put it in 1993: "There is no 'after the Cold War' for me. So far from having ended, my cold war has increased in intensity, as sector after sector of American life has been ruthlessly corrupted by the liberal ethos.... Now that the other 'Cold War,' is over, the real cold war has begun," one for which "we are far less prepared" and "far more vulnerable." With the Cold War abroad over, it was time to win the "real" cold war—the one that Pat Buchanan kept championing, against enemies deemed far more dangerous than those in Moscow and Beijing had been. As one political cartoon replayed the famous scene of surrender on the deck of the battleship Missouri, "the Smithsonian"—humbled and professorial—capitulated to military force, with Japanese diplomats (although buck-toothed and caricatured) playing only a background role.

The Enola Gay contest echoed earlier struggles over who controlled U.S. culture, who valued the U.S. past, who deserved mention within it, and who controlled federal action in those matters. Bitter controversies had already erupted, for example, over a federal amendment against "flag-burning," over National Endowment for the Arts funding of "dirty" pictures, over the museums that displayed such work, over battle sites supervised by the National Park Service, and over the Smithsonian's earlier exhibits about air power and settlement of the West. Rehashing those exhibits while mounting its case against the Enola Gay display, Air Force Magazine established its adherents' sense of connection among these controversies. Avid historians in their own way, patriotic conservatives felt themselves facing the same domestic enemies—liberals, United States-bashing scholars, feminists, gays, racial and ethnic minorities, antiwar activists—in all these battles, as well as in the lopsided contest over U.S. entry into the Gulf War. The nit-picker can point out that the political coalitions in these struggles were complex and shifting: unilateralist queer-baiters like Pat Buchanan had railed against the U.S. war in the Gulf, libertarian conservatives had inveighed against the flag amendment, and most historians as sociated with the museum's exhibit were indifferent to the cultural politics of queers and feminists. But there was enough


By not presenting the effects on the ground of the atomic bombing, the Enola Gay exhibit could focus on the happy results of the bombs' use—the U.S. lives presumed saved by bringing the war to a rapid end, and also the power and technological supremacy the bombs gave the United States. However, since people would become more aware of that power by actually witnessing the bombs' destructiveness, the American Legion and other self-proclaimed patriots who opposed the original exhibit may not have benefited as much as they hoped from the removal of the pictures of destruction and carnage. This January 1995 cartoon is by Signe Wilkinson, Cartoonists and Writers Syndicate, reprinted here with permission.
consistency for the defenders of patriotic orthodoxy to feel besieged by the same forces in every contest.

Those struggles also played into the *Enola Gay* debate by their focus on "political correctness." The historians and curators’ "academic arrogance is beyond belief," insisted the AFA’s Jack Giese, and indeed arrogance is hardly unknown among academics. But as in many preceding struggles, outrage at such arrogance was largely a posture calculated to disguise the grip on cultural power sought by many conservatives, whose claim that only veterans could assess war’s meaning was itself remarkably arrogant. Besides, quarrelsome leftists and liberals had long been unable and unwilling to impose "political correctness" on their own ranks, much less the nation. Instead, cultural conservatives—though their cohesiveness was sometimes exaggerated both by them and their opponents—were the ascendant force in this regard.

The most noisy and pertinent of those preceding contests was the 1993 debate about gays in the military. In that contest, as in the *Enola Gay* struggle, "patriotic" forces defeated their perceived foes at home, and use of U.S. power in the world was rarely the real issue. Pentagon studies and military officials reluctantly admitted the fitness of lesbians and gay men to serve and the fact that they had long done so. They did indeed claim that the open presence of homosexuals would damage military fitness—but because frightened or offended straight soldiers presumably would resign, fail to enlist, panic in the showers, or retaliate against homosexuals: in short, be unwilling or unable to fight.

But the 1993 debate was largely about citizenship, not marksmanship. Advocates of the "ban" on gays feared that acceptance of homosexuals’ military service would undermine their full citizenship—a fear with foundation, since African Americans and other social groups had used military service for just such purposes. With the notorious Tailhook affair hanging ominously in the background, patriotic conservatives also feared the expanding numbers and roles of women in the armed forces, against which a formidable weapon had been lesbian baiting made possible by the ban. Had the ban’s defenders been seriously worried about military threats to the United States, they could have accepted, even demanded, that the military recruit as widely as possible for the best personnel, as some patriotic dissenters like retired senator Barry Goldwater argued ("you don’t have to be straight to shoot straight," he insisted). That a substantial pool would be excluded from service underlined the extent to which not power abroad but a vision of sexual and cultural purity at home was the goal of most conservatives, with whom Goldwater, far more interested in martial virtue, was badly out of step.

Besides the quest for such purity, the 1993 debate foreshadowed the 1994 debate through the insistence that military veterans (though only straight ones) alone could judge such things. The claim of Clinton as nonveteran even to have a voice in the debate was widely ridiculed, as was his right to be commander in chief when sailors openly mocked him in his presence and Congress insisted on legislating, for the first time, in this matter. Indeed, expelling the nonveteran from this arena, as from the *Enola Gay* debate, was another way to maintain purity.

The connection between the gay debate of 1993 and the bomb debate of 1994 was more than temporal and political—it was also imaginative and intuitive. One article on the bomb debate was devilishly titled "*Enola Gay Baiting,*,” while political cartoonists also played with the connection. One featured the name "ENOLA GAY" with "GAY" crossed out and replaced by "HETEROSEXUAL." Others added to the mix a January 1995 incident in which Republican congressman Dick Armey called gay Democratic representative Barney Frank "Barney Fag": one pictured a TV reporter "at the Smithsonian to unveil the controversial exhibit of the Enola Frank—I mean GAY!"; another showed Armey commenting "on the proposed commemoration of the Enola Fag." Such material did not trace the precise path of imagination connecting the gay debate and the museum.

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debate, but it did powerfully evoke the sense of connection. The name of Tibbetts’s mother, “Enola Gay,” probably had long had an odd sound to it for many Americans—too feminine for such a mighty deed (though U.S. crews often named their bombers after women), and “Enola” lacking the ring of an authentic American name. Its reemergence in the wake of the gays-in-the-military debate seemed to tap visceral fears that the United States had to defeat both Clinton’s initiative on the Pentagon’s antigay policy in 1993 and the museum’s exhibit in 1994.

The initiatives of the “patriots” after the exhibit’s demise indicated the continuity of their efforts to defeat foes at home. Emboldened by apparent victory in the Enola Gay fracas, the American Legion, backed by 170 House members and 29 senators, launched a new campaign for an amendment banning flag burning. “Nothing disgusts me more than liberals who hide behind the 1st Amendment and want to support people who desecrate Old Glory,” pronounced Rep. Van Hilleary (R-Tenn.), a Gulf War veteran.13 His language directly echoed earlier charges that liberals hid behind the First Amendment to defend dirty pictures, just as “disgust” captured the feeling of many “patriots” towards advocates of the museum’s exhibit.

Thus patriotic culture was both inward looking and backward looking, focused on enemies at home and long-ago triumphs abroad. The fact that it drew so heavily from the reservoir of a half-century old event suggested as much. Nor can its dependence in that regard be attributed to some mysterious alchemy produced by fiftieth-year anniversaries, for such moments never carry intrinsic power and resonance, but instead derive their meaning from current circumstances (in 1968 no great hubbub characterized the U.S. celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of victory in World War I). Champions of patriotic orthodoxy drew on 1945 because there was little after it for them to tap. Korea and even more Vietnam were useless for such purposes. The most recent case of patriotic glory—the Gulf War—offered little of value: it had been too lacking in gravity of sacrifice, too easy in conduct, and too ambiguous in outcome to establish a new reservoir of patriotic memory.

Even victory in the Air and Space debate rang a bit hollow. The forces of orthodoxy defeated the planned exhibit, but got only a puny alternative (to be sure, perhaps all they wanted), just as they had met only limited success—or substantial defeat—in other recent struggles over how to memorialize the United States’ military past.14 They did not prevent withdrawal of a proposed atomic bomb postage stamp that embodied (if in trivial fashion) their celebratory view of the bomb’s use. And as was long the case with that view, erasing evidence of the destructiveness of the bomb had ambiguous consequences, for it was above all the destruction that measured the magnitude of U.S. triumph.

Defenders of patriotic orthodoxy who criticized the Enola Gay exhibit were mainly concerned with winning a cultural and political victory over foes at home. "Don't ask" about the decision to drop the bomb: that it was well-known in 1945 that the decision was far from unanimous among U.S. military leaders; whether with better diplomacy Japan might have surrendered without being invaded and further losses of lives; or about the role that might have been played by financial, "scientific," and Cold War considerations. The phrase "Don't Ask" also slyly refers to the gays-in-the-military debate, which resulted in a "don't ask, don't tell" policy. This cartoon is by Ben Sargent. © 1995 Austin American-Statesman, and reprinted here with the permission of the United Press Syndicate, all rights reserved.

How were Americans to celebrate an event whose effects they could not see? And how long could the celebration go on if it was to be entrusted only to the war’s aging veterans?

Wounded and reviled in the Enola Gay fracas, curators and historians understandably had trouble seeing such an ambiguous outcome. Many perceived an "unprecedented" assault on intellectuals, historians' expertise, and truth itself, an assault perhaps even reminiscent of how Nazis attacked Jews in the 1930s. They were hardly wrong to sense defeat, but there was nothing unprecedented in the assault, as any historian of the McCarthy era knows. After all, scholarly challenges to patriotic orthodoxy were, in the context of public cultural institutions, relatively recent, the Air and Space Museum itself largely founded and long maintained as a celebratory showcase of American technology. Thus success in stopping the Enola Gay exhibit turned back the clock more than it started something new—and did so, as historians should remember, without recreating the global circumstances and U.S. power that had made patriotic orthodoxy mean what it had in the post-World War II era.

The backward and inward focus of patriotic culture, like the limits of its victory, can be exaggerated. Success in cultural struggles like this one also shapes the future: bearing down on defense policy, orienting how textbooks and the media teach Americans to think about both past and future, and strengthening the forces of political and cultural conservatism.

The failure of the exhibit's supporters indicated how much free rein patriotic culture may have in this regard. By the same token, the tight links of the AFA (hardly just a "veterans" organization) with the aerospace industry and other allies involved a real political and budgetary agenda. As has long been true, air power patriots were less "isolationists" adverse to the deployment of U.S. power than "unilateralists" insistent on its unfettered application—just as their version of the atomic bomb's use erased the role of the Soviet Union and other allies in ending the Pacific War. In their memory, the bomb's use embodied vigorous and unilateral action, supremely destructive power, and the total absence of risk to U.S. lives—an ideal combination some saw as realized in the Gulf War and might yearn to replicate in a new crisis. After all, it might be hard to keep "polishing the fire engines" without finding a blaze to justify them.

But among most guardians of patriotic orthodoxy, neither a fear of looming crisis abroad nor the will to use U.S. power in it was apparent, in part because patriotic culture also had absorbed key themes from antiwar culture by insisting on the horror of losing U.S. lives in war. At least for the foreseeable future, its thrust will be to defeat perceived foes at home and advance its vision of U.S. cultural purity, not to do battles with enemies abroad. Its exponents seemed intent on entombing patriotic culture in museums—and making a museum of it—not on projecting it into the world. For them, the proper exhibit was to be a shrine to the past, not a beacon to the future. Far from anticipating a glorious future for American military power, they were more like Englishmen in the 1950s fondly remembering bygone imperial glory of the pre-World War I era. Ironically, the debate, and the partial triumph by "patriots" in it, showed that the United States' great age of military hegemony was drawing to a close.

The Enola Gay and the Politics of Representation

by Lane Fenrich

With Marshal McLuhan dead and buried, perhaps it was inevitable that so many of those embroiled in the Enola Gay controversy would have forgotten how much the medium is in fact the message. As if debating colleagues around a seminar table, the historians involved did what historians do, sifting evidence and arguing about how best to read it. In contrast, opponents of the proposed exhibition of the restored bomber at the Smithsonian Institution’s National Air and Space Museum focused on the exhibit as such and the impression it would make on those who saw it. What they wanted was both simpler and more far-reaching than either the museum or its allies ever fully grasped: to control the imagery with which Americans remember the devastation rained on Hiroshima and Nagasaki and its place in what is still called the “good war.”

To be sure, critics of the exhibition objected strenuously to the “revisionist” scholarship in which it was presumably grounded. That scholarship was hardly new, however, and the debate between “revisionists” and their “orthodox” opponents had long since reached a state of political and intellectual equilibrium. The exhibit's curators, Tom Crouch and Michael Neufeld, threatened that equilibrium not by “taking sides” but by proposing to contextualize their installation of the Enola Gay with physical and photographic evidence of the carnage in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Doing so violated the more than half-century-old etiquette by which Americans agreed not to see, and rarely to discuss, the bloody consequences of U.S. war making.1 Thus critics responded with outrage rather than mere rebuttal to the substitution of “burnt watches and broken wall clocks” and life-size photographs of their owners for the mushroom clouds that had long screened them out of American sight.2 For fifty years Americans had ignored those images or pretended they did not exist, as if Hiroshima and Nagasaki had simply vanished when Enola Gay and Bock’s Car left the runway on Tinian. Pictures of the destruction demonstrated that that was not the case, that real people, most of them civilians, had suffered and died as a consequence of U.S. actions. Unable to explain those images away—however much they invoked U.S. casualties as an emotional counterweight—critics struggled vigorously, and in the end successfully, for their suppression.

The veterans’ attack on the exhibition was motivated far less by a concern for historical accuracy than by the desire to rehabilitate a glorious past fallen into disrepute, to “reimage” not just the use of the atomic bomb but the history of air power, past and present.

To borrow a word from Bruce Franklin, opponents of the proposed exhibition (many of them veterans or at least claiming to speak for veterans) accused the curators of “reimaging” the conflict, of doctoring the evidence so that Americans looked like the bad guys.3 That the opposite was closer to the truth, that the veterans lobby clung to a view of the war that distorted or erased many of its complexities, only made it more difficult for the revisionists, once branded as such, to make themselves heard. Where Crouch and Neufeld relied on often forgotten archival images to construct a complicated picture of a war in motion, their opponents tapped images familiar for so long that most people took them for the whole truth: images of reluctant soldiers


steeled by enemy atrocities, of beaches stormed and taken, of hometown boys dying in one another's arms, and countless other tropes manufactured to commemorate and justify the agonies of warfare. These are images of a war that Americans were forced to fight by a treacherous and fanatical opponent, a war in which they simply did what they had to do. They are, moreover, images of combat, and especially Americans in combat. To a lesser extent, they are images of the technological might marshaled to break the enemy's will and capacity to continue fighting, images of planes skillfully evading enemy defenses and dropping their cargoes on chessboard targets. They are, in other words, images that not only reproduce a U.S. point of view but that obscure the range of U.S. choices and the consequences for the United States' adversaries.

To the extent that the curators "reimaged" the war, they did so by locating the Enola Gay in a trajectory of increasingly indiscriminate attacks on noncombatants—and by including the latter's point of view. The results were startling not because they were inaccurate but because they violated the conventions that five decades after the end of World War II still govern representations of those events. With few exceptions, even in the orgy of fiftieth-anniversary commemorations that coincided with the controversy, representations of "strategic" bombing (in itself an extraordinary euphemism) have depicted it as an impressive but bloodless display of military power and have avoided almost entirely the suffering on the ground. Thus when Crouch and Neufeld focused on the civilian casualties of U.S. bombing attacks (as opposed to the more familiar, far less revealing mushroom cloud, which the U.S. Postal Service even considered emblazoning on a commemorative stamp), critics quickly accused them of distorting history, a charge credible precisely because those casualties have so rarely entered Americans' field of vision.

Critics left little doubt that it was precisely the inclusion of visual evidence pertaining to Japanese bomb victims that made them angry and uncomfortable. As Air Force Magazine editor John Correll put it in the opening salvo of the controversy, although "the Enola Gay's task was a grim one, hardly suitable for glamorization ... many visitors [to the planned exhibition] may be taken aback by what they see." In order to see the plane itself, he alerted readers, they would have to wind their way through displays "designed for their shock effect," parts of which parents would not want to show their children. More even than the curators' interpretations, it was the "shock" of these visual representations that provoked Correll and others to go public with their objections.

Much of the protest, of course, was aimed at the parts of the proposed exhibit that documented the effects of the atomic attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki and traced their legacy into the Cold War. The former especially drew Correll's ire. Mirroring the curators' intention that the "Ground Zero" section be the emotional center of the installation, Correll made it a focal point of his analysis, twice describing its contents by way of indicting the exhibit as a whole. In addition to watches and clocks "frozen at the moment the bomb fell," he noted, the section would include such personal effects as "a schoolgirl's lunch box with remains of peas and rice reduced to carbon" and, whenever possible, photographs of those whose possessions would be on display. Moreover, he noted: Graphic exhibits include Japanese dead and wounded, flash burns, disfigurement, charred bodies in the rubble, and such vignettes as the smoking ruins of a Shinto shrine, a partially destroyed image of Buddha, a heat-fused rosary, and personal items belonging to school-children who died. Hibakusha (survivors of the bombing) describe what they saw and experienced.

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4. For a discussion of the origins of these images, see Roeder, The Censored War.
6. Ibid.
8. Ibid., p. 28. This inventory was frequently recycled in subsequent attacks on and reportage of the controversy. See, for example, Hugh Sidey, "War and Remembrance," Time (23 May 1994), p. 64; Nancy Kassebaum, Congressional Record (19 Sept. 1994), pp. 12968ff.
Another major complaint about the Smithsonian’s Enola Gay exhibit was that it depicted the Pacific War solely in terms of U.S. aggression and Japanese victimization. This was simply not true. Every version of the planned exhibit began with a vivid unit on the last months of the war in both Europe and the Pacific, including a video made primarily from U.S. newsreels. These newsreels would have left little doubt about the ferocity of the fighting and how Americans at the time perceived it. If this 1944 painting, The Price, by Life artist Tom Lea of a marine mortally wounded in September 1944 during the invasion of Peleliu in Palau is at all typical of the reporting of the era, the newsreels would surely have given an effective portrait of the war’s “bloodiest theater at its bloodiest moment.” This painting is reprinted here courtesy of the U.S. Army Center of Military History.

No one disputed the authenticity of the various artifacts and photographs assembled in the planned “Ground Zero” section—just their significance. In his Air Force Magazine call to arms, Correll called it “remarkably sympathetic to the Japanese” to represent “their losses in vivid detail while American combat casualties were treated in matter-of-fact summations,” and quoted the Air Force Association’s official complaint that “If anything, incredibly, it gives the benefit of opinion to Japan.” In subsequent attacks Correll took a seemingly more empirical stance, repeatedly noting that “in the first draft there were forty-nine photos of Japanese casualties, against only three photos of American casualties,” and that “there were only four pages of text on Japanese atrocities, while there were seventy-nine pages devoted to Japanese casualties and the civilian suffering, from not only the atomic bombs... but also conventional B-29 bombing” (emphasis added). As a consequence, he asserted, exhibit goers would leave with a view of the war peopled by U.S. aggressors and Japanese victims, one in which “rank-and-file aggressors and Japanese victims... talk about details of their fighting... [and] most of the individual Japanese speakers are persons who suffered injury themselves or who were witnesses to carnage. They talk about pain and suffering.”

When Crouch and Neufeld focused on the civilian casualties of U.S. bombing attacks (as opposed to the more familiar, far less revealing mushroom cloud), critics quickly accused them of distorting history, a charge credible precisely because those casualties have so rarely entered Americans’ field of vision.

Correll had a point: it would be a distortion to depict the Pacific War solely in terms of U.S. aggression and Japanese victimization. The museum, however, planned no such depiction. Every version of the planned exhibition, including the March 1994 draft that Correll originally attacked, began with a vivid unit on the last months of the war in both Europe and the Pacific. According to a July 1994 planning document, on entering the unit, visitors would see film footage intended to “put them back into the spring of 1945 and provide them with some basic historical information. This video will be primarily made from American newsreels, but may include Japanese footage or propaganda films... [and] will set the mood for the unit by giving visitors images of the end of the war in Europe, the fighting in the islands, firebombing, and exhortations to victory on the home front” (emphasis added).

Later drafts of the exhibition plan reportedly included subunits describing the attack on Pearl Harbor and the fighting that followed. Yet even without those subunits visitors would have been left with little doubt about the ferocity of the fighting or how Americans at the time had perceived it. Even in the earliest plans, the section was to be built around an “Okha suicide bomber hanging overhead and diving toward the visitor,” hardly an icon of Japanese defenselessness. Moreover, the period newsreels referred to in exhibition plans would have continually reminded viewers how the war had

10. Sidey, “War and Remembrance,” p. 64.
started and who it was against. (In an effort to fend off the public's increasing war weariness, newsreels of the day referred frequently not only to Pearl Harbor but to Japanese "fanaticism," a term the curators wisely marked as rooted in stereotype and wartime hatred.) Even if in some respects incomplete, this was nevertheless a remarkably effective portrait of the war's bloodiest theater at its bloodiest moment, one suggesting ways both sides had shaped and perceived the conflict. From the ultra-patriotic perspective of the veterans' lobby, however, that was precisely the problem.

At its core the veterans' attack on the exhibition was motivated far less by a concern for historical accuracy than by the desire to rehabilitate a glorious past fallen into disrepute, to "reimage" not just the use of the atomic bomb but the history of air power, past and present. In protesting the museum's treatment of the Enola Gay, Correll criticized it as well for what he called its "strident attack on air power" in an exhibition entitled "Legend, Memory, and the Great War in the Air" that had been organized in 1993. Examining the extravagant claims made before and after World War I about the decisiveness of air power and the ability to wield it with "surgical" precision, the exhibition emphasized the gap between such claims and the bloody realities surrounding the airplane's introduction into combat. "Two themes predominate," Correll complained, "the carnage on the ground and the unwholesomeness of military aviation. The military airplane is characterized as an instrument of death" (emphasis added).

How the curators might have portrayed their subject in a more "wholesome" manner Correll did not say. The only less "hostile" view he left room for, however, was one celebrating air power as an antiseptic technological solution to the horrors of ground warfare, a view that screened out civilian casualties altogether. Thus he clinched his attack on the museum's credibility by noting (without comment, so preposterous did he consider the argument) that the curators of the World War I exhibit had "give[n] credence to speculation that 70,000 civilians were killed as an aftermath of the bombing campaign in the recent Gulf War . . ." A devout believer in the efficacy of "smart" bombs and Patriot missiles (the effectiveness of which he had seen in television footage carefully framed to obscure Iraqi casualties), Correll regarded such "speculation" as nothing less than fantastic, an a priori judgment probably shared by most of his readers. But why did Correll act at all? However "hostile" the curators' treatment of the Enola Gay, the "good war" hardly needs defending. Most people, at least most Americans, accept as a matter of course that the United States had to fight, that its cause was just, and that whatever it did to win was justified. Historians might complicate the story a bit, but the underlying premises, I think, would remain unshaken. One answer is that images of unrelenting bombing and of "disfigurement, charred bodies in the rubble . . . and personal items belonging to schoolchildren who died" strike powerful chords in a nation still shaking off the shame of the war in Vietnam. Images of civilian casualties in that war, a war in which the bombing of noncombatants was much noticed and much protested, are familiar to a degree that has never been true of World War II. Then and now, defenders of U.S. actions in Vietnam blame the familiarity of such images—many of which are uncomfortably similar to images the Air and Space Museum might have used to document the effects of incendiary bombing and atomic attack on Japanese cities—for turning the public against the war and those who fought it and for undercutting the United States' ability to wield power in the years that followed. That sense of grievance formed a mostly unmentioned backdrop against which the Enola Gay controversy took shape, with critics quick to move from rebuking the curators for including visual evidence of Japanese suffering to tarring them with the stigma of Vietnam-era anti-Americanism. (Thus Neufeld was found guilty by association as a Canadian who had attended the University of Calgary at a time "when Americans were fleeing to Canada to escape the Vietnam War." Crouch, who is an American, was denounced for having curated an exhibit at the National Museum of American History on the World War II internment of Japanese-Americans, in itself evidence that he was "remarkably sympathetic to the Japanese." )

Unable to explain those images away—however much they invoked U.S. casualties as an emotional counterweight—critics struggled vigorously, and in the end successfully, for their suppression.

Having identified the curators with "sixties-style radicalism," opponents of the exhibit accused them of disrespect for the Enola Gay and disregard for the lives of American servicemen, the same type of accusations still leveled at opponents of the war in Vietnam. Both John Correll and Kansas senator Nancy Kassebaum, for example, began their indictments of the museum by criticizing its stewardship of the plane. With virtually his first words Correll charged that the plane, which the Smithsonian acquired in 1950, had been put into storage only after "a decade of deterioration in open weather," an injury presumably compounded now by the museum's curatorial mishandling. Introducing a sense-of-the-Senate resolution condemning the proposed exhibition, Kassebaum followed Correll's lead, alleging that "until 1960, the plane was simply left outside, exposed to [the] elements and allowed

The bodies of a man and a woman are barely discernible in the rubble on the morning of 10 August after the bombing of Nagasaki the previous day. Some feel that one reason critics of the Smithsonian’s Enola Gay exhibit were so vehemently opposed to having such pictures in the exhibit was that they were afraid that having people see the effects of the bombs on civilians might lead to a return of the “Vietnam Syndrome.” Defenders of U.S. actions in Vietnam believe that the prevalence of pictures of civilian casualties during that war were a major factor in turning the U.S. public against the war and those who fought it, and for undercutting the United States’ ability to wield power in later years. In contrast, during the Gulf War the news was carefully managed, and the focus was almost entirely on U.S. technological prowess and how the war affected U.S. lives. The proponents of air power thus wanted to be sure that the image of antiseptic air warfare that was achieved during the Gulf War wouldn’t be tarnished. This picture by Yamahata Yosuke, the pictures of casualties on p. 6, and the picture of Yamaguchi Senji on p. 39 of this issue of the Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars are all from Hibakusha, a booklet edited and published by Nihon Hidankyo (The Japan Confederation of A- and H-Bomb Sufferers Organizations) (Tokyo), and they are reprinted here courtesy of Nihon Hidankyo.

17. Ibid., p. 24; Kassebaum, p. 12968.
Few would want to deny U.S. veterans their right to be honored and to celebrate the end of World War II. Yet to work toward a world where violence and force are not the predominant ways to solve conflicts, people of all countries need to look carefully at what has really happened in the past. How can we in the United States demand that the Japanese take responsibility for their role in the war when we ourselves are unwilling to even consider that some of the things the United States has done before, during, and after "the good war" need to be studied and questioned. The above July 1995 cartoon is by Benson and is reprinted here with the permission of the United Feature Syndicate, Inc., while the November 1994 cartoon below is by Jeff Danziger. © Christian Science Monitor, reprinted here with permission.
Two more of the many cartoons published in 1995 that capture the absurdity of the radically scaled back Enola Gay exhibit. The above cartoon is by Carlson, ©1995 Milwaukee Sentinel, and it is reprinted with the permission of the Universal Press Syndicate, all rights reserved. The cartoon below is by Dan Wasserman, ©1995 Boston Globe, and it is distributed by the L.A. Times Syndicate, reprinted with permission, all rights reserved.
Two Statements by Smithsonian secretary I. Michael Heyman

Over the past decades the Smithsonian Institution has become the centerpiece of national museums of depth and excellence. Like other museums, they have become important educational institutions. To rob them of this function would be to relegate them to relatively arid presentations that would little enhance viewer understanding or learning. It is the responsibility of the curators of the Smithsonian to organize their exhibitions "fairly" when controversy is apparent, viewers should be given full opportunity to decide for themselves how to interpret the events portrayed.

With freedom from political interference comes the responsibility to present the debate as vividly as possible to allow our visitors to make up their own minds.

I. Michael Heyman
August 1994

Between these two statements the U.S. Senate passed its Senate Resolution 257 on 23 September 1994, and the Smithsonian announced on 30 January 1995 that it was scaling back the Enola Gay exhibit. At that time Heyman declared, "In this important anniversary year, veterans and their families were expecting, and rightly so, that the nation would honor and commemorate their valor and sacrifice. They were not looking for analysis and, frankly, we did not give enough thought to the intense feeling such analysis would evoke." In spite of this responsiveness and complete capitulation to the needs of the veterans, the critics were not satisfied, and on 2 May 1995 the museum director, Martin Harwit, resigned in the hope that his stepping down would "satisfy the museum's critics." One of those critics, Republican representative Sam Johnson of Texas, responded: "I feel confident that we will continue to make sure that all the museums are on the right track... This resignation is the first in a long line of management changes that I expect to see" (Associated Press dispatch, 3 May 1995). The above Heyman quotes are from "Remembering Hiroshima: The Smithsonian Controversy," available from the Fellowship of Reconciliation, Box 271, Nyack, NY 10960, telephone: (914) 358-4601. The Smithsonian statement on the right was provided by Joe Morton, who photographed it while participating in a demonstration at the exhibit on 2 July 1993.

This display commemorates the end of World War II and the role of the B-29 Enola Gay in the atomic mission that destroyed Hiroshima and, along with the atomic bombing of Nagasaki, led to the surrender of Japan on August 14, 1945.

The National Air and Space Museum originally planned a much larger exhibition, which concentrated attention on the devastation caused by the atomic bombs and on differing interpretations of the history surrounding President Truman's decision to drop them. That planned exhibition provoked intense criticism from World War II veterans and others, who stated that it portrayed the United States as the aggressor and the Japanese as victims and reflected unfavorably on the valor and courage of American veterans. The Museum changed its plan substantially, but the criticism persisted and led to my decision to replace that exhibition with a simpler one. In a statement I issued at that time I said the following:

I have concluded that we made a basic error in attempting to couple an historical treatment of the use of the atomic weapons with the 50th anniversary commemoration of the end of the war. Exhibitions have many purposes, equally worthwhile. But we need to know which of many goals is paramount, and not to confuse them...

...the new exhibition should be a much simpler one, essentially a display, permitting the Enola Gay and its crew to speak for themselves. The focal point of the display would be the Enola Gay. Along with the plane would be a video about its crew. It is particularly important in this commemorative year that veterans and other Americans have the opportunity to see the restored portion of the fuselage of the Enola Gay.

The exhibition you are entering does what I intended, with a few changes. We have added material on the Smithsonian's restoration of the Enola Gay and some explanatory material on the B-29 aircraft and the 509th Composite Group, which was led by then Col. Paul Tibbets, who piloted the Enola Gay on the Hiroshima mission. We also have a section at the end where we ask for your reactions to the exhibition. We welcome your comments.

I. Michael Heyman
Secretary
Smithsonian Institution

The Smithsonian statement at the entrance to the exhibit attempts to explain its drastic reduction and claims to be only "permitting the Enola Gay and its crew to speak for themselves." Nonetheless, the new, smaller exhibit includes the assertion that although the bombs "caused many tens of thousands of deaths... [their use] led to the immediate surrender of Japan and made unnecessary the planned invasion of the Japanese home islands." Certainly an understated reference to more than 300,000 deaths by 1969, followed by a highly debatable "fact" about the invasion!
Senate Resolution 257

Senate Resolution 257 was passed on 22 September 1994 after being introduced in the Senate by the Republican senator from Kansas, Nancy Landon Kassebaum, on 19 September 1994. This nonbinding resolution editorialized that the bomb was “momentous in helping to bring World War II to a merciful end.” Several senators also threatened the Smithsonian with massive funding cuts if it neglected its “obligation under the Federal law to portray history in the proper context of the times.” Although the exhibit had plenty of scholarly backing, the federal government provides 85 percent of the Smithsonian’s funding. In the end the Smithsonian succumbed to the pressure from the Senate and its other critics and stripped the exhibit of any references to the crucial questions around the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Whereas the role of the Enola Gay during World War II was momentous in helping to bring World War II to a merciful end, which resulted in saving the lives of Americans and Japanese;

Whereas the current script for the National Air and Space Museum’s exhibit on the Enola Gay is revisionist and offensive to many World War II veterans;

Whereas the Federal law states that “the Smithsonian Institute shall commemorate and display the contribution made by the military forces of the Nation toward creating, developing, and maintaining a free, peaceful, and independent society and culture in the United States”;

Whereas the Federal law also states that “the valor and sacrificial service of the men and women of the Armed Forces shall be portrayed as an inspiration to the present and future generations of America”; and

Whereas, in memorializing the role of the United States in armed conflict, the National Air and Space Museum has an obligation under the Federal law to portray history in the proper context of the times; Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, that it is the sense of the Senate that any exhibit displayed by the National Air and Space Museum with respect to the Enola Gay should reflect appropriate sensitivity toward the men and women who faithfully and selflessly served the United States during World War II and should avoid impugning the memory of those who gave their lives for freedom.

America, Land of Mercy

Kurihara Sadako, poet of Hiroshima, survived the atomic bombing of that city. Then thirty-two and today eighty-one, she has dedicated her life to the memory of 6 August and to the fight against nuclear weapons. Many of her eloquent poems deal with postwar attempts to hide the true face of Hiroshima. They also indictment Japan and its rulers for wartime crimes and the Japan-U.S. alliance. Kurihara wrote the following poem after hearing that the U.S. Senate had called the dropping of the bombs merciful.

by Kurihara Sadako, translated by Richard H. Minear

Dropping the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, they say, was America’s merciful gift. It injected its own people with plutonium, to experiment;
its ABCC
stripped the hibakusha
of Hiroshima and Nagasaki,
took samples of their urine and blood
and collected data, preparing for nuclear war.1
When hibakusha died, ABCC staff
appeared at hospitals and homes
and, like vultures, carried off the corpses.
They preserved keloids and intestines in alcohol
and sent the glass bottles off to America.
Even today, fifty years later,
Hiroshima and Nagasaki have high death-rates from cancer.

If dropping the atomic bombs was merciful,
then the Imperial Army’s Nanjing slaughter
of two hundred thousand
and the Nazis’ gassing of six million
must have been merciful, too.
Along the way to the Nazi concentration camps,

they say, stood signs saying,
“This way to comfort.”

America became the guardian god of justice and democracy,
established bases all over the world,
and firms up its preparations to drop merciful bombs at any moment, anywhere.
In Korea, in Vietnam, in the Persian Gulf, in Mozambique,
it dropped merciful bombs;
in Mozambique, it bombed a hospital and, the butt of world criticism, pulled out.2
America, guardian god of justice and democracy,
even used the alias of the United Nations to drop merciful bombs on regional conflicts, ethnic conflicts.

The Air and Space Museum at the Smithsonian is the sanctuary of the sacred nuke.
The godhead is the Enola Gay,
and on the fiftieth anniversary of the bomb the Smithsonian unveils the merciful godhead and displays ostentatiously,

1. ABCC: Atomic Bomb Casualty Commission (1947–75; after 1975, the Radiation Effects Research Center). It conducted medical research on hibakusha (survivors of the atomic bomb) but had a policy of offering no medical treatment.

2. The references to Mozambique should be to Somalia.
as wonder-working proofs, the personal effects of Hiroshima and Nagasaki hibakusha who were burned to death like insects.

But the American poet Hermann Hagedorn composed these lines:
“It fell, it fell, it fell. It did not vaporize churches and cities, but it pulverized America’s conscience. O Lord, what hath America wrought?”

And we know that even now many Americans are sick at heart.
O America—
stop bowing before the evil god of nukes and for the sake of a nuclear-free tomorrow let’s all join in shouting,
No more Hiroshimas! No more Nagasakis!


An infant being weighed during his nine-months’ examination as part of the Atomic Bomb Casualty Commission (ABCC)’s genetics project, its largest and most interactive program. Although this looks like a typical well-baby checkup, that certainly is not the case when one considers that this healthy-looking baby may be genetically damaged and he will receive no treatment from the ABCC. As is obvious from Kurihara Sadako’s poem, the ABCC’s no-treatment policy has been deeply resented and has contributed to the feeling that the atomic bomb survivors were thought of as guinea pigs. In reality the people in the study received at least some help since diagnosis is a first step in treatment, and in certain cases some of the ABCC doctors—especially the Japanese ones—did in fact provide drugs and other treatment. Nevertheless, the policy was a no-treatment policy, and aside from the surmountable cultural, licensing, and financial reasons for this, there is evidence that the main reason was that U.S. leaders felt that “treatment of survivors would constitute public U.S. atonement for the use of atomic weapons.” Thus even in those early days Americans were uneasy about the morality of dropping the bomb, but the official U.S. solution was denial—as it still seems to be, judging from the censorship of the Smithsonian’s Enola Gay exhibit. This picture and the caption information about the ABCC are from M. Susan Lindee’s Suffering Made Real: American Science and the Survivors of Hiroshima (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1994). The picture is from the William J. Schull Collection, and it is reprinted here with the permission of the Archives of the Houston Academy of Medicine, Texas Medical Center, Houston, Texas.

Some of the 23,000 items such as clinical records, slide specimens, and human remains that were taken to the United States from Hiroshima in 1945 for use in writing up the results of the U.S. investigation of the medical effects of the bombing. The U.S. authorities suppressed medical research findings that might have been helpful in the treatment of victims, and these items weren’t returned to Hiroshima until May 1973.
Hiroshima/Nagasaki as History and Politics

by Sodei Rinjiro*

Sometime during the U.S. occupation of Japan, General Douglas MacArthur, the supreme commander for the Allied powers in Japan, asked an aide to determine the number of Christians in Japan before and after the war. MacArthur was eager to know. In an effort to Christianize and so democratize the Japanese, he had encouraged hundreds of missionaries to come to Japan. He even authorized the use of military facilities to distribute one million pocket-size Bibles. If these efforts were not to be in vain, there had to be a significant increase in the number of converts. A report was duly prepared by the General Headquarters’ Religious Division, which concluded that “the number of Japanese Christians was 200,000 before the war and 20,000 after the war.” Colonel Nugent, chief of the Civil Information and Education Section, anticipating his commander-in-chief’s response, exclaimed “that’s not enough”—whereupon one of Nugent’s staff in the Religious Division became so furious that he added some zeros to the original numbers. Soon a happy MacArthur started boasting in his speeches that “Christianity is spreading all over Japan. Christians in Japan are now two million.”

So much for MacArthur. The lesson is that numbers are important but can be manipulated. However, rather than plunge into the issue of the politics of numbers in the Smithsonian controversy, let me say something about the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki themselves.

The Atomic Bombings: An End or a Beginning?

There has been endless controversy concerning what really brought Japan to its knees on 14 August 1945. Was it the atomic bombing of Hiroshima on 6 August? The Soviet entry into the war two days later? Or was it not the combination of these two blows that did the job? Some even argue that the bombing of Nagasaki the day after the Soviet Union entered the war was necessary as a coup de grace. Here I would like to set aside the familiar argument of the U.S. Strategic Bombing Survey that Japan would have surrendered anyway—without the bombs, without the Soviet entry, and even without a U.S. invasion of Japan’s main islands—and instead present the testimonies of three commentators from three different countries.

One is a U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) analyst whom I encountered here in Washington more than a decade ago. He volunteered that his research convinced him that it was the bomb that finished Japan. The CIA man quite naturally dismissed the Soviet entry as a significant factor.

Those who make history and those who write it are, or should be, two different kinds of people. Of course, participants can leave memoirs that enrich our understanding of the past. No one, however, participant or not, has any right to dictate how history should be written.

The second commentator is a Soviet diplomat whom I interviewed in Moscow in 1982. He claimed that he personally observed the aftermath of Hiroshima within a week of the bombing. How he got there is a long story. To make a long story short, Ivan Nikolaevich Tzekhonya, a second secretary of the Soviet embassy in Tokyo, accompanied by a Japanese Foreign Office official, drove all the way to Hiroshima and wandered around the ruined city for a couple of days until he heard the emperor’s radio statement of surrender when he was in the nearby city of Kure. Tzekhonya’s report, including some photographs, must have been duly submitted to Stalin through Ambassador Malik, who was in Japan. Tzekhonya’s main point was that the atomic bomb was merely a bigger bomb, and its effect was less impressive than the Tokyo air raid of five months previously, which he also witnessed. In his view,
Although some are convinced that Japan might have surrendered without the bombing of Hiroshima or the Soviet entry in the war two days later, most Japanese believe that the one-two punch of these events is what caused Japan to surrender on 14 August 1945. This picture shows Stalin, Truman, and Churchill when they met in Potsdam in late July 1945 to carve up the postwar world, issue Japan a "final warning," and demand that Japan surrender unconditionally. However, Truman had already approved the bombing of Hiroshima, and some believe that it occurred when it did because the Soviet Union was scheduled to declare war on Japan on 8 August 1945. By dropping the bomb on 6 August the United States assured that Japan would surrender to the United States, not the Soviet Union, and consequently the United States would be the occupier of Japan. As P.M.S. Blackett wrote in 1948 in Fear, War, and the Bomb, the dropping of the bomb on Hiroshima was "the first major operation of the cold diplomatic war with Russia." This is a U.S. Army Signal Corps photo.

Japan surrendered simply because the great Soviet Union entered the war.

The third witness, so to speak, is a Japanese Imperial Navy admiral, Hoshina Zenshiro, who was the last surviving member of the meeting at which Emperor Hirohito opted for Japan’s surrender. His impression was that it was a combination of two blows that eventually brought Japan to its knees: the bombing of Hiroshima and the Soviet entry into the war. It was this quick one-two punch that knocked out Japan. Admiral Hoshina added that the Nagasaki bomb was “an appendix”—meaning, I believe, not so crucial.

Now, whom to believe? This is not a simple task, because none of these so-called witnesses were neutral. The CIA analyst obviously represented the official U.S. view: it was the atomic bombs that ended the war, period. The Soviet diplomat predictably dismissed the importance of the bombs. Most Japanese, myself included, tend to side with Admiral Hoshina in placing equal weight on the bombs and the shock of the Soviet Union’s declaration of war.

In this context it was interesting to find in the final version of the proposed Smithsonian script a statement from Emperor Hirohito to General MacArthur that “the peace party did not prevail until the bombing of Hiroshima created a situation that could be dramatized.” There are several versions of what the emperor told MacArthur at their first meeting on 27 September 1945, but to Japanese scholars such as myself this is totally new. Where did such a statement come from?

In any case, in his surrender broadcast to the nation the emperor did declare that the cruelty of the new weapon forced him to surrender. This was also quoted in the original Smithsonian script: “The enemy has begun to employ a new and most cruel bomb, the power of which to do damage is indeed incalculable, taking the toll of many innocent lives. Should we continue to fight, it would not only result in an ultimate collapse and obliteration of the Japanese nation, but it would lead to the total extinction of human civilization.”

Thus the war came to an end. The bomb was a factor in Japan’s surrender, but not the only one. The more interesting issue, however, is whether the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki was an end or a beginning. To the U.S. GIs who were awaiting the invasion of Japan’s main islands, the atomic bombs certainly signaled the end of that bloody war. As for the crew of the Enola Gay, once their mission was accomplished they became part of history. As indicated in the Senate resolution condemning the Smithsonian’s original script, the atomic bombs have been enshrined in the collective memory of the United States as having been “momentous in helping to bring World War II to a merciful end.” To most Americans, the bombs marked THE END in capital letters, so to speak.

However, the bombings also were a beginning in two ways. One involved those who survived. For these survivors—we call them hibakusha, which literally means those who were exposed to the bombs—suffering began on 6 August or 9 August 1945. Life has remained a living hell to this day, filled with constant fear of radiation disease and death, and even anxiety over possibly passing genetic problems on to one’s offspring. Today there are approximately 350,000 survivors of the two atomic bombs. The great majority naturally live in Japan, but there are significant numbers of survivors in both North and South Korea. Many of the South Korean hibakusha have been identified and now are asking the Japanese government for compensation because they were victims of Japanese
colonialism in that most of them were in the two cities as forced laborers when the bombs were dropped.

Also, little known to most Americans, there are somewhat less than 1,000 U.S. hibakusha living in Hawaii and the continental United States. Most of them are nisei—second-generation Japanese Americans—who for one reason or another were trapped in Japan when the war broke out. Since the mid-1970s they have been asking the U.S. government to provide medical care, but to no avail. For all these surviving victims, the war never really has ended. In fact, they themselves are a living history testifying to the enduring horror of the atomic bombings.

In a second sense, August 1945 also was a beginning rather than an end: the beginning of a new era called the nuclear age.

It all started with Hiroshima and Nagasaki—the spiraling nuclear arms race, accompanied by thousands of nuclear tests causing deadly contamination; nuclear proliferation to many countries; and the so-called peaceful use of nuclear energy, which has brought out the immense inherent risks of nuclear power plants. It is hardly an exaggeration to say that Hiroshima could be the beginning of the end of human beings.

Power versus Misery

In the early 1960s Oe Kenzaburo, the recent Nobel Prize laureate for literature, authored a small book of reportage entitled Hiroshima Noto (Hiroshima notes). This was a pioneering work on the human suffering caused by the bombing. In that book, Oe introduced a journalist named Kanai Toshiro, an editorial writer for the Chugoku Shimbun, a Hiroshima newspaper. Although not a survivor himself, Kanai emerged as a strong advocate urging a reluctant Japanese government to compile a white paper on the atomic bombings. The almost pathetic question he raised was this: “Is the atomic bomb better known for its power or for the human misery it caused?” To this, Kanai himself gave the obvious answer. As Oe put it, “Hiroshima and Nagasaki are clearly known throughout the world because the power of the atomic bomb was demonstrated there, not because of the suffering of the A-bomb victims.”

When the Smithsonian’s board of trustees decided to cancel its planned exhibition, the victims of Hiroshima and Nagasaki were, in a way, killed again. Because the original plan emphasized the human aspects of the bombing, the victims whose misery was not allowed expression were silenced again.

That the atomic bomb was the utmost demonstration of U.S. military power and technology was all too clear from President Truman’s statements right after the bombing of Hiroshima. The recent aborted plan to use the nuclear mushroom cloud as a design for a postage stamp commemorating the end of the war against Japan demonstrates how this image lingers in the American mind as a symbol of invincible U.S. power.

As the Cold War intensified, the United States devoted itself to enhancing this awesome power, the Soviets followed suit, then Great Britain, China, and France. All these nuclear powers succeeded in creating nuclear arsenals that vastly transcended the destructive power of the Hiroshima bomb. As Kanai lamented, “the nations of the world tend to ignore or forget the great human misery caused by the ‘smaller’ bomb.”

The Enola Gay exhibit was changed to focus on the atomic bombings as the end of World War II rather than as the beginning of the nuclear age, which, of course, involved the beginning of suffering for the survivors of the bombs. Yamaguchi Senji, the survivor shown in this picture, was working outside the Mitsubishi Arms Manufacturing Works in Nagasaki, 1.2 kilometers from the hypocenter. He suffered severe burns on the right side of his head and upper body, and months later children would run away from him saying “Here comes the Red Demon.” Plagued by one disease after another and discouraged by the poor results of repeated operations, Yamaguchi often tried to commit suicide, but he eventually turned instead to working with the campaign to ban nuclear weapons. This picture and caption information about Yamaguchi are from Hibakusha, a 1982 booklet edited and published by the Nihon Hidankyo (the Japan Federation of A- and H-Bomb Sufferers Organizations), 5-31-7 Shinbashii, Minato-ku, Tokyo, Japan 105.

6. Ibid., p. 61.
Above, the remains of Hiroshima's Chamber of Commerce Building, which was 300 meters from the hypocenter and has been left in its ruined state as a peace memorial. This A-Bomb Dome is now one of many other "structures and monuments, each and all expressing the fervent desire for peace," in a large Peace Memorial Park that includes the Statue of the Children of the A-Bomb (see p. 15 of this issue); a Memorial Cenotaph dedicated to those who died from the blast, with the ambiguous inscription "Rest in peace, for the error will not be repeated"; and the Flame of Peace shown below with the Peace Memorial Museum behind it. The vow is that this flame will be kept burning "until the day nuclear weapons disappear from the world." The museum displays photos, art, and relics of the bombing, and has a new section on Hiroshima's militaristic history. In spite of this recent addition, many feel the museum does not do enough to present the aggressive nature of Japan's involvement in the war that led to the atomic bombings. Thus in Japan as well as in the United States there is a need for memorials to look at history honestly and openly so that people can learn from the past. The above photo is by Sherry A. Mendez, Impact Visuals, and the one below, the quotes, and most of the information in the caption about the memorial park are from tourist booklets published in 1978 by the City of Hiroshima.
When the Smithsonian's board of trustees decided to cancel its planned exhibition, the victims of Hiroshima and Nagasaki were, in a way, killed again. Because the original plan emphasized the human aspects of the bombing, it was strongly opposed by the American Legion, the Air Force Association, conservative Congressmen, and a large part of the U.S. media. Those in positions of power won out again. And the victims whose misery was not allowed expression were silenced again.

We should listen to the voices of the survivors. Their concern is not primarily with the past, but rather with the past as 'prologue to the future.' Again I quote Kanai Toshiro from Oe Kenzaburo’s book: “The fervent desire of the A-bomb victims now, on behalf of all the dead and all survivors, is to ensure that people of the world fully understand the nature and extent of the human misery of an atomic bombing, not just the destructive capacity.”

Oe calls these survivors “moralists,” by which he means that “they possess unique power of observation and expression concerning what it means to be human.” He further says, “the reason they became moralists is that they experienced the cruellest days in human history,” and have endured for many years since then. And, again in Oe’s words, these survivors have never lost “the vision of a nation that will do its best to materialize a world without any nuclear weapons.”

What Public History Is Not

It is understandable that the United States’ war veterans want to celebrate the glory of their war. Although I was on the wrong side, I envy those who fought “the good war,” and I pay full respect to those who gave their last measure for their beloved country. They certainly made history. However, those who make history and those who write it are, or should be, two different kinds of people. Of course, participants can leave memoirs that enrich our understanding of the past. No one, however, participant or not, has any right to dictate how history should be written.

The historian’s task is to defrost the past from myth and cook it, so to speak, with newly found evidence and reinterpretations that only historical hindsight can provide. With the distance of half a century, one should be able to see not only the complex and terrible events leading to the mission of the Enola Gay, but also the realities of the victims of Hiroshima and Nagasaki whose living memory can be provided by survivors. The former demands calmness and the latter requires courage—both of which are necessary if we are to attain a level of historical perspective that does justice to all sides.

There are many pitfalls in writing an acceptable public history. One is to make a deal, in which each side cancels out unpleasant parts of its own history. Cases in point are Pearl Harbor and Hiroshima/Nagasaki. Here allow me to indulge in a personal account. In the fall of 1970 I was in New York City helping to promote an exhibition of murals painted by the artists Maruki Iri and Maruki Toshi depicting the human sufferings of the atomic bombings. On that occasion I paid a courtesy call on a distinguished U.S. professor of Japanese politics and history. When I told him why I was in New York, he became upset and scolded me. “Are you still having such a hangover about Hiroshima? It was a war, and in war death is inevitable. You forget about Hiroshima, then I’ll forget about Pearl Harbor.”

To this I responded, “No sir. I will not. I admit that Pearl Harbor was a treacherous attack, and I apologize for that. But Hiroshima was the first shot of a nuclear war, quite possibly the beginning of the end of human beings. So we should not forget Hiroshima lest we be doomed.” The professor was not convinced, but I still believe that to try to cancel out Hiroshima with Pearl Harbor, or vice versa, is bad history and bad politics. We must remember both events—and all the horrors in between them—lest we repeat the same or more formidable mistakes.

This most certainly applies to how the Japanese themselves should present Hiroshima and Nagasaki as public history. The strong sense of being victimized has been widely shared not only by citizens of the two cities but by the Japanese public in general. Many Japanese regard Hiroshima/Nagasaki as another Holocaust: civilian victims died horribly, and survivors are still haunted by their encounter with hell on earth. This memory is so strong that many Japanese tend to regard themselves as innocent victims. Of course the historical fact is that Japan was an aggressor nation and perpetuated unspeakable atrocities. As a partner of Nazi Germany, the perpetrator of the Holocaust, Japan invaded first China and then Southeast Asia, causing immense misery to millions of innocent peoples. And Hiroshima itself was a major military city, home to the large port of Ujina through which millions of soldiers were sent to the battle fronts. Hiroshima also had many factories devoted to war production. The city of Nagasaki was not very different.

The fact that the people of Hiroshima and Nagasaki suffered the bombing, and that survivors are still suffering from aftereffects, does not absolve them from being aggressors. Actually, the atomic bombing was the end result of that war of aggression. When you go to Hiroshima and look into the Peace Memorial Museum there, however, you scarcely see this part of history. (Recent changes in the official Hiroshima exhibition reportedly have improved this situation somewhat, but visitors from Asia unanimously say they have not gone far enough.)

If the U.S. critics of the Smithsonian’s proposed exhibition are to blame for exercising political pressure to prevent anything but a celebratory presentation of the atomic bombs, those who are behind the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum also must be criticized for failing to honestly present the aggressive nature of Japan’s war. History must be presented in its totality—its dark as well as triumphant sides. Any decent presentation of the past will provoke controversy, and only through open and honest discussion can we attain higher understanding of the record of human conduct we call history.

Those who use history for political purposes eventually are punished by Clio, the muse of history. Like ostriches in the desert, by burying their heads in the sands of the past they are bound to fail to see the present, let alone the future. The role of public history, I believe, is to help people look back freely on the past in order to understand the murky present—and hopefully, with that light from the past, to illuminate the path toward a yet unknown future.
Between Pearl Harbor and Hiroshima/Nagasaki:
A Psychological Vicious Circle

by Yui Daizaburo, translated by Laura Hein

Introduction

Today, fifty years after the Pacific War ended, crucial differences in the way the war is recalled in Japan and in the United States are coming to light. Of course even now when Japanese people criticize the United States for dropping the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, they are met with the rejoinder “remember Pearl Harbor.” This can be called the long-term vicious circle of wartime imagery in both countries, but now, exactly fifty years after the end of the war, it is especially striking.

In the United States this vicious circle is indicated by the cancellation of the exhibit that started with the plan of the National Air and Space Museum of the Smithsonian Institution to display the *Enola Gay*, the plane that dropped the bomb on Hiroshima, and then grew into a study of both the decision to drop the bombs and the effects on their victims. The Smithsonian’s decision to cancel caused great disappointment and anger among the Japanese, particularly among older *hibakusha* (survivors of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima or Nagasaki) who have been suffering the effects of the bombings for the last fifty years.

However, on the Japanese side there are others who stand on the principle that they cannot criticize other countries more than their own. For example, the Ministry of Health and Welfare is using the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the end of the war to plan the establishment of a War Dead Peace Memorial Hall. In spite of calls for major changes in its plans by many historians and researchers, the ministry has excluded from representation foreign war victims—including those from the rest of Asia—and has included only Japanese who were killed in battle and their families. Also, conservative politicians and the Association of Bereaved Families have militantly resisted a Diet resolution of self-reflection and self-criticism, proposed for the fiftieth anniversary of defeat, with the argument that such a move would “desecrate the spirits of the war dead who died as martyrs in a national calamity.” Their efforts have stalled the resolution, and it passed in only a weakened form in June 1995.

Why is it that although fifty years have passed since the war’s end, the gap in Japanese and American perceptions of the war is growing wider rather than converging? Perhaps the reason is that although fifty years is a long span in an individual’s life, for the history of a nation or a people it is very short. If so, we must make full use of analyses of the forms of nationalism in both countries that are behind these remembrances of the war. Why is it that in the realm of economics, national boundaries are becoming less important, but in the sphere of politics and culture, consciousness of race and national community (*minzoku to kokumin*) are becoming hugely influential? Thus the differences in styles of nationalism between Japan and the United States are my subject here, together with an analysis of the gap in the two countries between their memories of the Asia-Pacific War.

Americanism and the Struggle over the Atomic Bomb Exhibit at the Smithsonian

On 30 January 1995 the Board of Directors of the Smithsonian Institution decided to radically scale back the proposed exhibit that was to have run from May until January 1996. Although the plan had been to present both a discussion of the decision to drop the bombs and their effects on their victims, now the exhibit consists mainly of the front half of the *Enola Gay* and information about the airplane and its crew. The exhibit also states that the bombings killed “many tens of thousands” but saved lives by causing Japan to surrender immediately. The five-hundred-plus-page script for the exhibit was completely eliminated, ending a controversy in which it had been revised four times.

In the end the original thinking of the Air and Space Museum curators was almost completely erased. According to a July 1993 draft proposal for the exhibit:

> The primary goal of this exhibition will be to encourage visitors to undertake a thoughtful and balanced re-examination of these events in the light of the political and military factors leading to the decision to drop the bomb, the human suffering experienced by the people of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the long-term implications of the events of August 6 and 9, 1945. . . . The museum hopes that the proposed exhibition will contribute to a more profound discussion of the atomic bombings among the general public of the United States, Japan, and elsewhere.  

One of the controversial themes of the original Enola Gay exhibit was that the decision to drop the bomb was influenced by U.S. feelings of revenge for the attack on Pearl Harbor as well as by racial prejudice intensified by the Japanese military’s desperate fighting in the last months of the war. Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that “Remember Pearl Harbor” was a rallying cry in the United States throughout the war, and that in the United States racial prejudice was a factor not only in the internment of Japanese Americans but in the way the Japanese enemy was portrayed. As John Dower points out in Japan in War and Peace (New York: The New Press, 1993), although U.S. political cartoonists routinely gave the German enemy Hitler’s face and allowed that some were “good Germans,” Japanese were typically caricatured as homogenously short, round-faced, jug-eared, buck-toothed, and myopic as a race. Along these lines, one of the many popular songs inspired by Pearl Harbor was “There’ll be no Adolph Hitler or yellow Japs to fear.”

The above World War II poster and the postcard and matchbook on the right are typical of the sentiments of the era. The poster is from and courtesy of the National Park Service, and the postcard and matchbook are from and courtesy of Ted Przychoda.

The curators hoped to contribute to an understanding of those events not only by reflecting the reevaluations developed through recent scholarship, but also by addressing the debates, not just among Americans but also among people in other countries, including Japan. Thus the original stance of the Air and Space Museum curators was extremely scholarly, and as a result their first script was highly praised by academic specialists. Moreover, it was felt that their decision to present the bombing from the point of view of the hibakusha showed their internationalist perspective.

The original exhibit design was severely criticized for several of its themes. The first part, “A Fight to the Finish,” began with a kamikaze attack vessel suspended overhead and presented the theme that the decision to drop the bomb was influenced by U.S. feelings of revenge for the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor as well as by racial prejudice, itself encouraged by the Japanese military’s desperate fighting in the last months of the war and especially on Okinawa. This section was heavily criticized. The museum retreated from its description of a “race war,” changing the section title to the more neutral term “The War in the Pacific,” and also added new stress on Japanese atrocities and massacres.

The second section depicted the decision-making process, beginning with the Manhattan Project and including references to anti-Soviet strategy and arguments against the bombs’ use. However, after much criticism this material was revised to reflect the orthodox argument that dropping the bombs hastened the war’s end and saved U.S. lives that would have been lost in an invasion.

The fourth section was eliminated altogether. The curators had planned that the atmosphere would darken as visitors entered “Hiroshima, 8:15 AM, August 6, 1945 / Nagasaki, 11:02 AM, August 9, 1945.” The hibakusha were to tell their stories on videotape alongside photos of them and their belongings. This was criticized as too harsh and too unbalanced a presentation of war casualties.

The American Legion and the Air Force Association (AFA) were the main critics, and also insisted that the exhibit title be changed to The Last Act: The Atomic Bomb and the End of World War II. Despite long negotiations, these groups were never satisfied with the Air and Space Museum’s proposal. No matter
The text in the original script of the Enola Gay exhibit that particularly rankled the critics was the one stating that most Americans fought World War II for revenge, while most Japanese fought "to defend their unique culture against Western imperialism." In this cartoon Henry Payne captures their sense that contemporary feminist and multiculturalist criticisms within the United States were being inappropriately transferred to discussion of World War II, although those cultural linkages were actually developed far more by the critics than by the curators. This 1994 cartoon by Henry Payne is reprinted here with the permission of the United Feature Syndicate, Inc.

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The opposition, including the American Legion—with a membership of 3.1 million people, of whom about half are World War II veterans—had fixed views of the bombing. In other words, rather than seeing this as an exhibit of the suffering of the bomb victims, they saw it as an exhibit on the end of the war, in which the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki provided the opportunity for bringing that war to a close without a great sacrifice of U.S. soldiers' lives. This perspective explains why the museum's most impassioned critics came from the Air Force Association. Martin Harwit noted that the AFA leadership was opposed to the exhibit as soon as they found out about it in January 1994, so much so that they did not join the American Legion's attempts to revise it.

In fact, in March 1994 the AFA produced a scathing attack on the exhibit plan, titled "The Smithsonian and the Enola Gay." Air force veterans were also the core members of the Committee for the Restoration and Display of the Enola Gay. The AFA demanded that the museum display the Enola Gay "in a patriotic manner that will instill pride in the viewer for the outstanding accomplishments of the US and the Enola Gay in ending World War II without the need for an invasion of Japan and without the additional invasion-related casualties." By the time it circulated this document, the AFA had already collected 8,000 supporters for its position.

For example, the AFA and its supporters were upset that Japanese "losses, particularly to B-29 incendiary bombing, were described in vivid detail while American casualties were treated in matter-of-fact summations." Secondly, the AFA article also disapprovingly quoted a script line that argued: "For most Americans, it was a war of vengeance. For most Japanese, it was a war to defend their unique culture against Western imperialism." Third, the AFA also complained that the museum "treats Japan and the United States as if their participation in the war were morally equivalent. If anything, incredibly, it gives the benefit of opinion to Japan, which was the aggressor," and accused the curators of manipulating history for partisan political reasons. Finally, they criticized the museum for departing from its mission to show respect for the role of the U.S. armed services in maintaining U.S. security.

In other words, the AFA thought the exhibit challenged their own patriotic views, which emphasized the contributions of servicemen to national defense, when it included analysis of


the atomic bombings from the Japanese side as a multicultural perspective. Indeed, the AFA mentioned with disdain a number of other Smithsonian exhibits on multiculturalism installed since the mid-1980s, and then tied the Enola Gay exhibit to them.

Patriotism was the central reason for the criticism by the veterans. They saw the air war as a way to avoid a bloody ground war, since the sufferings of the bombed were barely visible from their perspective. Thus the bomb was one of their glorious achievements. During the Vietnam War, although many of the memoirs by ordinary U.S. soldiers are tragic, the ones from the pilots are remarkably full of their memories as "war heroes."

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4. Ikoi Hidetaka, Janguru-kuruuzu ni uttsuke no hi (Perfect days for a jungle cruise) (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobo, 1987).

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"But the real betrayal of American tradition would be to insist on a single version of history or to make it the property of the state or any group. History in America is based on freedom of inquiry and discussion, which is one reason why Americans have given their lives to defend it."

This insistence on patriotism was easily assimilated by politicians. On 22 September 1994 the pattern was set when the whole Senate adopted Senate Resolution 257, introduced by the Republican senator from Kansas, Nancy Landon Kassebaum. Resolution 257 baldly stated that "the role of the Enola Gay during World War II was momentous in helping to bring World War II to a merciful end, which resulted in saving the lives of Americans and Japanese" and then resolved that "any exhibit displayed by the National Air and Space Museum with respect to the Enola Gay should reflect appropriate sensitivity toward the men and women who faithfully and selflessly served the United States during World War II and should avoid impugning the memory of those who gave their lives for freedom."  

The Smithsonian was thus enjoined to limit its exhibit to praise for the sacrifices of U.S. servicemen and those who "gave their lives for freedom." However, scholarly research over the last fifty years has given us a more complex picture, not only of the decision to drop the bombs, but of the United States during World War II in general. This inflexible stance by the Senate precludes building on any of those new insights or the documentation on which they were based. On the contrary, the Senate's definition of patriotism concerning World War II is exceedingly narrow.

In other words, politicians and veterans think of the fiftieth anniversary as an occasion for praise and commemoration, not for a scholarly conference. For individuals this emphasis on simple emotion is natural. However, public memory of past events is also always revised and challenged by later scholarship. The museum's perspective was fundamentally scholarly and international, but the other side wanted it to be emotional, patriotic, and commemorative. The clash was inevitable.

When he announced that he was drastically cutting back the exhibit, the Smithsonian secretary, Michael Heyman, said of this contradiction: "Despite our sincere efforts to address everyone's concerns, we were bound to fail. I have concluded that we made a basic error in attempting to couple a historical treatment of the use of atomic weapons with the 50th anniversary commemoration of the end of the war." Of course the Air and Space Museum was established for "commemorative" purposes, but does that mean it can be pressured to excise all its scholarly underpinnings? The Smithsonian exhibit had lots of scholarly backing but the federal government provides 85 percent of its funding—and this fact made resistance to the Senate extremely difficult.

The media analyses of the Smithsonian also turned on this debate between a commemorative and a scholarly focus. On the day before the final Smithsonian decision, the New York Times warned that a group of senators and veterans threatened to "hijack" the museum. Their editorial put it in stark terms: "But the real betrayal of American tradition would be to insist on a single version of history or to make it the property of the state or any group. History in America is based on freedom of inquiry and discussion, which is one reason why Americans have given their lives to defend it." Similarly, the Wall Street Journal expressed anxiety about the intolerance and ignorance of the Republican Party, when it assessed the Republican political pressure on the Smithsonian as motivated mainly by a desire to win in the November 1994 midterm elections.

On the other hand, the Washington Post clearly supported the Smithsonian's decision to all-but-cancel the exhibit, calling the exhibitors revisionists and denying that their ideas were based on solid history. The Washington Post editorialized:

It is important to be clear about what happened at the Smithsonian. It is not, as some have it, that benighted advocates of a special-interest or right-wing point of view brought political power to bear to crush and distort the historical truth. Quite the contrary. Narrow-minded representatives of a special-interest and revisionist point of view attempted to use their inside track to appropriate and hollow out a historical event that large numbers of Americans alive at that time and engaged in the war had witnessed and understood in a very different—and authentic—way."

The Los Angeles Times also agreed, calling for the Smithsonian to honor those who fought Nazism and Japanese militarism. So the U.S. mass media were divided on this but mainly supported the decision to scale back the exhibit. This is another indication that the fiftieth anniversary of the war will be celebrated in the United States in a very nationalistic manner.

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Although some Americans felt that the gutting of the Enola Gay exhibit was a serious blow to freedom of inquiry and discussion, others were convinced, as is obvious from the above cartoon, that the curators of the exhibit were themselves "narrow-minded representatives of a special-interest and revisionist point of view." The core of the problem was that the museum's perspective was fundamentally scholarly and international, and the other side wanted it to be emotional, patriotic, and commemorative. With nationalism on the rise in both the United States and Japan, it is hard for public historians in these countries to be multicultural and objective when dealing with an issue as sensitive as World War II. This cartoon is by Oliphant, ©Universal Press Syndicate. It is reprinted here with permission, all rights reserved.

Japanese observers of this year-long public debate on how to display the atomic bomb were very sorry to see the subjects of the decision-making process and the bomb's terrible effects on victims excluded from the exhibition. Even so, as Robert Jay Lifton, who has studied the psychological effects of the bomb on hibakusha for many years, says, this is "the first national American debate" on the bomb. Clearly, more debates are needed. There are still several unresolved issues.

The first is the accumulation of historical research. Many scholars have challenged in fundamental ways the official story of the decision to drop the bomb. There is a very strong sense that the Smithsonian has just turned its back on their evidence. Of course, debate continues on such issues as the role of anti-Soviet policy in the decision to drop the bomb. Nevertheless, as longtime prominent researcher Gar Alperovitz has pointed out, no matter how conservative the scholar, hardly anyone these days swallows whole Truman's argument in late 1945 that he dropped the bomb in order to save lives in a land invasion and bring the war to a speedy end. Truman's diary, published in 1979, creates real doubts about the official story, and as Alperovitz has noted, the "consensus among scholars is that the bomb was not needed to avoid an invasion of Japan—and further; that alternatives to the bomb existed and that Truman and his advisers knew it." 10

But this scholarly "common sense" has not spread to veterans and politicians. The main perspective has continued to be from the point of view of individual U.S. soldiers and sailors who saw the bomb as changing their own personal destiny. All the news reports of the controversy included this veterans' perspective. 11 There is a real gap between these two ways of understanding historical events—as historians or as people who lived through the era. Also, when remembering war, because the memory of fallen comrades is such an important issue, commemorative feeling dislodges rational self-analysis. Another way to put it is that this difference quickly creates an awareness of a generational divide.

The veterans and their allies also defended themselves with the argument that dropping the bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, by terrible example, controlled the spread of nuclear war. This is the doctrine of "realism" preached by the U.S. government: that the atomic bomb has served the function of preventing war and maintaining a balance of power. But


this argument neglects the problem of why the officials did
not consider alternatives to dropping the bomb on populated
areas. Indeed, in the earlier stages of development some
nuclear physicists argued passionately for a demonstration of
the bomb's power somewhere where there were no people.

The second issue is the perception that the cancellation
of the atomic bomb exhibit represents an extremely dangerous
attack on academic and museum freedom. The Organization
of American Historians responded to this issue three days before
the Smithsonian's final decision with a letter by President Gary
Nash, past-president Eric Foner, and president-elect Michael
Kammen. They argued that cancellation of the exhibit "will
send a chilling message to museum administrators and curators
throughout the United States. . . . Doing so would send the
explicit message that controversial subjects cannot be exam­
ined openly as a part of our democratic civic life." and that
some aspects of our history are "too hot to handle." After the
Smithsonian acted, these historians blasted the decision as
"self-censorship" and "historical cleansing." 12

Scholarly research over the last fifty years has given
us a more complex picture, not only of the decision
to drop the bombs, but of the United States during
World War II in general. This inflexible stance by
the Senate precludes building on any of those new
insights or the documentation on which they were based.

That such a danger existed was suggested by reports that
some Congressmen were demanding that the museum's direc­
tor, Martin Harwit, be fired and were planning to summon the
"revisionist" museum curators to testify at a Congressional
hearing. This seemed to many scholars like a new era of
McCarthyism. Indeed, Harwit resigned on 2 May 1995.

But at the same time we must consider the distinction
between "public historians," who present materials to the general
public, and "academic historians," who teach and serve as ex­
erts. As this case shows, public historians do not have adequate
safeguards for their academic freedom, even though their own
work brings them face to face with the pluralistic values of the
general population. The Enola Gay incident symbolizes the
difficulties for public historians.

Finally, this dispute is fundamentally about the tension
between nationalism and multiculturalism, as indicated by the
AFA's concern over previous multiculturalist exhibits. In the
mid-1980s the Smithsonian had several exhibits on minority
peoples and human rights. For example on the two hundredth
anniversary of the Constitution, the Smithsonian's Museum of
American History hosted an exhibit on the internment of Japa­
nese-Americans, A More Perfect Union. Then in 1992 the Smith­
sonian marked the five hundredth anniversary of Christopher
Columbus's arrival in America with a display that described the
devastation Europeans wreaked on the New World.

The 1980s were an era of a conspicuously conservative turn
in U.S. politics, including attacks on affirmative action, a move­
ment to make English the official language, growing nativism
among the white middle class, and very strong attacks on mul­
ticulturalism. Nevertheless, when the Smithsonian hosted some
exhibits from a multiculturalist perspective, it was strongly
supported by some groups within U.S. society, such as racial
minorities, liberals, and people concerned with human rights. In

In spite of the fears and criticisms of American "patriots," the
curators of the Enola Gay exhibit wanted to present the Japanese
point of view not because they were pro-Japanese but because they
saw Hiroshima and Nagasaki as evidence of the damage nuclear
weapons inflict on humans. Postwar Japanese are very much aware
of the enormity of the suffering and the lingering effects of radiation,
and Japanese observers of the Enola Gay debate were disappointed
and angry to see the terrible effects of the bombs excluded from the
exhibit. This adaptation of Edvard Munch's famous 1893 lithograph
The Cry captures the terror of nuclear weapons and was used in a
1980s brochure announcing a Rocky Flats Action Week aimed at
closing down the Rocky Flats Nuclear Weapons Plant near Golden,
Colorado, on Nagasaki Day.

12. Perspectives (Organization of American Historians newsletter),
Feb. 1995, p. 3. For another quote from this organization, see p. 63
of this issue of the Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars.

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contrast, when the Air and Space Museum took up the atomic bombing, there were strong academic groups in favor, but they were not able to prevail over the politically powerful pressure groups such as the veterans organizations.

But the curators did not come to their decision to present the Japanese view of the bombing simply from a multiculturalist perspective. They had also grasped the value of Hiroshima and Nagasaki as a symbol of the dangers of the nuclear era. The director, Martin Harwit, was influenced by his service during the 1950s at the Bikini hydrogen bomb tests. "I think anybody who has ever seen a hydrogen bomb go off at fairly close range knows that you don't ever want to see that used on people," he commented. However, in the eyes of the nationalists this perspective was not a profound insight but, rather, overemphasized Japanese suffering and was simply "pro-Jap."

In U.S. society today, fifty years after the end of the war, nationalism is on the rise, and it is still not possible to think about other countries multicurricularly or as part of human history. In particular, given the growing trend among Americans to see "Americanism" as a combination of the concepts of freedom and nationalism, memories of World War II have become symbols of the anti-fascist "holy war" and "victorious Americanism." But of course, "the good war" has a double meaning. It is also about the way that the war economy brought the United States out of the 1930s depression. Americans know that the United States's international position has declined since then, and their memories of that "former good America" during the war is tied to those anxieties as well.

### The Fiftieth Anniversary of Defeat and the Shadow of Neonationalism in Japan

At the same time that the Smithsonian was considering canceling the atomic bomb exhibit, in Japan the Ministry of Health and Welfare announced its plans to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the end of the war by establishing a War Dead Peace Memorial Hall. In an ironic counterpart to the U.S. debate, it explicitly excluded foreign war victims and was intended to celebrate only the Japanese war dead and their families.

The memorial hall started in December 1979 as a proposal by the Association of Bereaved Families to the ministry for a memorial and commemorative hall for the children of those killed in action. After receiving this request the welfare minister set up a private advisory board in July 1985 to study the feasibility of such a memorial hall, which produced a plan in August 1992. According to plans in Welfare Ministry documents, the first hall that visitors enter will house a "Prologue Exhibit" of 250 square meters. The second room, 185 square meters, will display material called "The Road to War" on the era from the first World War to the Great Depression and Japan's international isolation. The third area, 705 square meters, will display "Daily Life of the People during the War." This section will depict the mobilization of the whole Japanese people, including such scenes as sending soldiers off to the battlefront, the air raids, and the war's end. Then the fourth section will show in 510 square meters "Daily Life during the Occupation." After a 75-square-meter room showing "The Hardships of Orphans Trying to Survive on Their Own," the last section, "Looking toward Peace," will be 175 square meters and will introduce the viewer to the new constitution, the peace treaty, and repatriation of Japanese after the war.

Of course these plans are not final and may still change. Nonetheless, they devote only a very small section (30 square meters) of the display "Daily Life of the People during the War" to China and Southeast Asia. This is just a tiny fraction—1.5 percent—of the total exhibit space. Moreover, this section, called "China and Southeast Asia under Japanese Occupation," was not designed to present the perspective of Asians themselves. The December 1987 report of the advisory body to the welfare minister demonstrated as much when it pointed out that "we must take care to avoid causing anxiety to the citizens of nations in the Asia-Pacific region who were victimized during the war, or giving them the impression of warmongering." This warning shows their lack of interest in the point of view of foreign, especially Asian, war victims.

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In the end the Japanese plan for a peace memorial hall, like the Air and Space Museum, was overwhelmed by the atmosphere of nationalist commemoration at the fiftieth anniversary of the war—an atmosphere that closed down the possibility of scholarly, internationalist exhibits. The process differed in the two countries, although the conclusions were very similar.

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On that point a Ministry of Health and Welfare official gave the following response to questions in the House of Councilors' Welfare Committee in May 1993: "In addition to being a site for people who want to mourn those who were sacrificed in war, our aim is that the War Dead Peace Memorial Hall will support eternal peace by transmitting to younger generations the suffering of war from the point of view of daily life and the difficulty of keeping body and soul together during and after the war. Given that, our goal is not to apologize to Asian nations." As that reply makes

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clear, the plan for the War Dead Peace Memorial Hall is focused squarely on Japanese sacrifice and especially Japanese military dead. Moreover, rather than having a scholarly perspective, it is deeply steeped in imagery of national sacrifice. Indeed, including material on foreign war victims would contradict the basic principle of the exhibit by inescapably forcing reflection on Japanese war responsibility and atrocities. Thus including foreign victims would deeply contradict the goal of commemorating the Japanese war dead as desired by the Association of Bereaved Families.

In June 1993 thirty-five scholars, mainly professional historians, asked the Japanese government to convene a council for a broad intellectual discussion to review and revise the plans in a way that would incorporate the perspectives of neighboring countries. Faced with this external pressure, the internal Welfare Ministry committee proposed incorporating a Center for World War II Historical Documents into the plans for the memorial hall. The debate among the various parties was also reported in the newspapers. The Welfare Ministry thus had to choose, on the one hand, between intensifying the scholarly focus of the memorial hall and including reports and exhibits of injury to neighboring nations or, on the other, persisting in its original plan to commemorate Japanese victims. Finally in January 1995 the Welfare Ministry returned to its first plan of a commemorative space to support survivors, prompting several of the members of the advisory board to resign in protest. A ministry official said he felt "at the mercy of foolish controversy" over opposing views of history.

In the end the Japanese plan for the War Dead Peace Memorial Hall, like the Air and Space Museum, was overwhelmed by the atmosphere of nationalist commemoration at the fiftieth anniversary of the war—an atmosphere that closed down the possibility of scholarly, internationalist exhibits. The process differed in the two countries, although the conclusions were very similar. In the United States the museum curators started out with a scholarly plan written from diverse perspectives, but their plan was smashed by political pressure from veterans and senators who wanted to commemorate and show respect for the sacrifice of U.S. soldiers. In contrast, in the Japanese case the Welfare Ministry bureaucrats originally proposed a memorial hall redolent with imagery of Japanese sacrifice, which was criticized from the outside by researchers who wanted to create a more scholarly and international exhibit, but at least for now this has been vetoed. Moreover, in Japan, despite (1) the efforts of one group of researchers, (2) the cost of 12.3 billion yen, (3) the fact that this will be the first state-sponsored war museum in the country, and (4) a huge debate in the Diet, the Welfare Ministry and its supporters in the Association of Bereaved Families were able to prevail, revealing the shallow roots of democracy in Japan.

In Japan, after the museum is completed the ministry will try to transfer management to the Association of Bereaved Families. As demonstrated by its stance in support of the Yasukuni Shrine's role as an official religious protector of the nation and of prayer there by cabinet ministers, even under the new constitution the Association of Bereaved Families strongly affirms the prewar "imperial view of history." To give such an organization official responsibility for the management of a national war museum is truly extraordinary. In addition, extremely archaic thinking lies behind the lovely term of "commemorating" the war dead, which, to put it nicely, the state is preserving within Japanese society. This continuity with the prewar era operates precisely to thwart contemporary efforts in the Diet to mark the fiftieth anniversary of defeat with a resolution expressing self-criticism for the war.

In August 1991, four months before the fiftieth anniversary of the bombing of Pearl Harbor, the mayor of Honolulu asked that Japanese officials be invited to the ceremony only on the condition that they apologize for the war. But the Japanese government spokesman, Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Ishihara Nobuo, refused, arguing that "the entire world is responsible for the war." He went on to say that "because war could not be avoided, all those involved should reflect. . . . It will take tens or hundreds of years before the correct judgment is delivered on who is responsible for the war." Although this kind of statement muddying Japan's war responsibility is a familiar litany from a succession of conservative administrations, it was harshly criticized by Dutch journalist Ian Buruma. In his book, *The Wages of Guilt*, Buruma noted that Ishihara called for U.S. apologies along with any Japanese ones and commented: "The Japanese had flunked the test. They were not invited. They were still a dangerous people." Actually, the Japanese Diet considered a resolution reflecting on the war in December of that year, but conservative politicians defeated it. In Buruma's terms, they "flunked the test," but they have another opportunity to pass it in August 1995 on the fiftieth anniversary of the defeat.

Politics are more chaotic in Japan than four years ago. Groups such as the Association of Bereaved Families are more strongly opposed than they were before to any Diet resolution that either apologizes for the war or takes an antiwar stance. The roster of signatures of one of these opponent groups, the Committee to Act on a National Movement toward the Fiftieth Anniversary of the End of the War, explained why: "Such a resolution would be unique in world history, and Japan would become the only nation to accept responsibility for a war as a criminal nation." This would "wound the honor of the state and the Japanese people, profane the spirits of the war dead martyred in a national calamity, and would deal a grievous blow to the future of the nation and the Japanese people."

According to this group, Japan does not alone bear responsibility for World War II. Its members believe that "the Greater East Asian war was a holy war [seisen], made unavoidable by the international world context surrounding the Japanese state and the Japanese race [minzoku] at the time." Thus they reject Japanese recognition of its own responsibility for a war of invasion: "For Japanese to stick the label of 'a cruel and brutal race' on themselves is to defile the history of their fatherland with their own hands and burden our descendants with a dishonored Japanese race." They also reject the postwar Tokyo War Crimes Tribunal, which fixed responsibility for an invasive war on Japan, as nothing but "victors' justice." Thus,


In Japan a controversy like the one in the United States over the Enola Gay exhibit has persisted for sixteen years, ending with a parallel decision to create a War Dead Peace Memorial Hall to commemorate the end of World War II by celebrating Japanese sacrifice and war dead but explicitly excluding foreign victims. A conservative group prominent in the debate, Japan's Association of Bereaved Families, has also worked to block Japan's recognition of its responsibility for a war of invasion, believing that to do so would mean accepting the charge that Japanese were a "cruel and brutal race." Nevertheless, Japan's invasion of other Asian countries was extensive and greatly expanded during World War II, as can be seen in the above map showing Japan's conquests by 1910, before December 1941, and until August 1942. This is a slightly modified version of a Vantage Art map (the original map had "1870," not "1910"), and it is reprinted here courtesy of Franklin Watts, Inc., of New York.

they argue, a "resolution of apology" has the character of a "resolution endorsing the assumptions of a Tokyo Tribunal view of history" and is "completely beyond the authority of the Diet." 19

This group's retrograde attitude is revealed by its terminology. It retains the wartime name of the Greater East Asian War, and still sees it as a defensive war. Nonetheless, it was able to collect 4.5 million signatures on a petition against the resolution, and 143 Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) members and 29 Shinsei Party members are blocking its passage through the legislature. 20

In June 1994, when the Japan Socialist Party, the Liberal Democratic Party, and the Sakigake formed a coalition government, they pledged to sponsor a "Diet resolution to reflect on Japan's role in the past war and express our determination to seek future peace." Originally the LDP agreed to this in order to form the coalition with the Japan Socialist Party, which was enthusiastic, but significant opposition within the LDP still poses many obstacles for the resolution.

The mass media, particularly the four national daily newspapers, was split on this subject. An editorial in the 26 February 1995 issue of the Asahi insisted that "the no-war resolution indicates political insight," while the Mainichi editorialized on 14 March that the resolution was necessary "to obtain a sincere reconciliation with Asian nations." In contrast, in an editorial on 8 March, the Yomiuri asked dismissively if the Diet "had the competence to 'decide' among the various views of history." Also, the Sankei weighed in with

an editorial on 27 February opposing the resolution on the grounds that it was unprecedented for a national legislature to apologize, and that wartime problems had been settled by the peace treaty. Moreover, an antiwar resolution might mean relinquishing Japan’s right to self-defense.

As the range of editorials makes clear, fifty years later there is no consensus on Japan’s role in the Asia-Pacific War. Conservative political parties such as the LDP, which held power through most of the postwar era, harbor within their ranks right-wing nationalists (yokuteki minzoku shugisha), who affirm the righteousness of the “Greater East Asian War.” At the same time, however, mainstream conservative politicians have closely followed the U.S. line on diplomatic and security issues, as symbolized by the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty. This congruence has strangely distorted the attitudes toward World War II of the right-wing nationalists within the LDP. Thus they supported ratification of the San Francisco Peace Treaty, including Article 11, which accepted responsibility for the Tokyo Tribunal verdicts. However, on the domestic political stage they blithely deny the “Tokyo Tribunal view of history.” As Yoshida Yutaka has pointed out, this created a contradictory double standard toward the war. Moreover, the United States, which privileged anti-Soviet strategy during the Cold War era, has massively ignored this contradiction.

Nonetheless, in the 1980s, because of economic growth and democratization, the other countries of Asia developed the power to express their position internationally for the first time in the postwar era and this double standard became more visible. This development was perhaps best symbolized by the Nakasone cabinet’s metamorphosis. Prime Minister Nakasone was originally known for his insistence on a nationalistic denial of the “Tokyo Tribunal view of history.” For example, on 15 August 1985 he marked the fortieth anniversary of defeat by becoming the first prime minister to pay an official visit to the Yasukuni Shrine. However, after China and other Asian countries vigorously denounced this move, the following year he discontinued his formal visits. His chief cabinet secretary Gotoda Masaharu announced that, “given the importance of international relations, we must appropriately consider the feelings of the peoples of neighboring nations.” Gotoda also responded to an inquiry in the House of Representatives by reaffirming the cabinet’s unified position that Article 11 of the San Francisco Treaty specifically expressed respect for the verdict of the Tokyo Tribunal. In other words, ironically, the first conservative administration to recognize the aggressive nature of the Asian-Pacific War was that of the nationalist politician Nakasone.

This trend continued with the end of the Cold War and the death of the Showa emperor, and the tempo increased in the 1990s, along with political reorganization. A symbolic event was the August 1993 statement to reporters by Hosokawa’s cabinet. “Given the state of international relations, we must appropriately consider the feelings of the peoples of neighboring nations.” Prime Minister Hosokawa announced that, “given the importance of international relations, we must appropriately consider the feelings of the peoples of neighboring nations.” Prime Minister Nakasone was originally known for his insistence on a nationalistic denial of the “Tokyo Tribunal view of history.” For example, on 15 August 1985 he marked the fortieth anniversary of defeat by becoming the first prime minister to pay an official visit to the Yasukuni Shrine. However, after China and other Asian countries vigorously denounced this move, the following year he discontinued his formal visits. His chief cabinet secretary Gotoda Masaharu announced that, “given the importance of international relations, we must appropriately consider the feelings of the peoples of neighboring nations.” Gotoda also responded to an inquiry in the House of Representatives by reaffirming the cabinet’s unified position that Article 11 of the San Francisco Treaty specifically expressed respect for the verdict of the Tokyo Tribunal. In other words, ironically, the first conservative administration to recognize the aggressive nature of the Asian-Pacific War was that of the nationalist politician Nakasone. 22 This trend continued with the end of the Cold War and the death of the Showa emperor, and the tempo increased in the 1990s, along with political reorganization. A symbolic event was the August 1993 statement to reporters by Hosokawa Morihiro just after he became the first non-LDP prime minister in decades. “For myself, I understand the Asia-Pacific War to have been a war of aggression and a mistake,” he said.

This statement was received positively by both the foreign press and the domestic population. According to a 13 November 1993 Asahi public opinion survey, 76 percent of those polled were in favor and 15 percent opposed. However, many members of two specific groups were fiercely opposed: conservative politicians and the generation old enough to have fought in the war. Indeed, Hosokawa’s statement polarized views of the war among these two groups. For example in a September Asahi poll, 25 percent of men sixty years or older hated Hosokawa’s statement. Also, all the newspapers published letters from people of the veterans’ generation expressing their bitter opinion along the lines of “if that war was one of aggression, then my friends just died like dogs, meaninglessly.”

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Ryutaro, at the time both president of the Association of Bereaved Families and the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI) minister in the Murayama Cabinet, made a similar argument in front of the Special Taxation Committee of the House of Representatives:

Japanese policy on the Chinese continent did include actions that could be labeled aggression. Moreover, when I look at the history of the Korean peninsula from today’s perspective, the choices of previous Japanese political leaders [waga no senpai kata] seem imperialist, even though they seemed appropriate at the time. However, I doubt Japan’s war with the United States, Great Britain, and the Netherlands can be called a war of aggression.

He understood the Asia-Pacific War to be two separate kinds of war. “Japan never intended to battle the Asian and Pacific peoples but their regions became a battlefield. I believe we truly caused them harm (meiwaku) when Asia became a war theater. Nonetheless, it is difficult to use the term “aggression” there. Perhaps it is a question of semantics, but I think there is a subtle difference.”

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Showing a skepticism born out of their experience of having been mobilized by the wartime state, most people in Japan feel that the “war brought sorrow,” including a sense that unlike the past when the war dead were sacrificed to nationalism and war-mongering, the future should be built on peace and international cooperation.

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Hashimoto’s argument that Japan was the wartime aggressor toward Asia but not in general demonstrates this new two-war theory. Conservative politicians used to argue that Japan was “liberating Asia.” This shift, which indicates a new Asianism in Japan, bears watching as the other side of the coin of anti-Westernism. The denial of war responsibility toward the Western countries reflects that the 1930s was an era of imperial struggle between the “have” and “have-not” countries, and further, that this division can still provide a nationalistic platform against the West for some Japanese today in this era of Japan as an economic superpower.

This new Asianism is more than just anti-Westernism. Ever since the stimulus of the Persian Gulf War, the Shinsei Party’s general secretary, Ozawa Ichiro, has responded to U.S. demands by provocatively calling for Japan to become a “normal nation” and actively encouraging deployment of the Self-Defense Forces overseas. He too acknowledges Japan’s war responsibility in Asia. In his book, Blueprint for a New Japan, he writes: “Japan is part of the Asia-Pacific and, needless to say, this is the most important region for Japanese diplomacy.” However, at the same time, Asian-Pacific people feel a sense of mistrust and vigilance toward Japan, based on “history.” We cannot deny that in one aspect of past history, Japan was indeed the aggressor there.”

This kind of comment reeks of expediency in order to establish future Japanese leadership in the Asian region. It is unclear to what extent this sort of claim involves real reflection on the war or is merely maneuvering for leadership.

Whatever the motive, in the early 1990s there was a new interest in Asia on the part of Japanese conservatives, splintering them—for the first time—on the subject of remembering the war. One right-wing group still maintains the reactionary nationalist position affirming all of the goals of the “Greater East Asia War.” As part of an anti-Western Asianism another group admits Japanese aggression toward Asia but insists on a war of “self-defense” against the West. A third group of moderate conservatives is trying to admit the entire Asia-Pacific War was one of aggression.

These divisions make unity on the Diet resolution difficult, although in June 1995 the ruling alliance agreed on language expressing deep remorse for actions against Asian nations but stopped short of apology. But old-fashioned nationalism seems to be growing stronger as the fiftieth anniversary of the defeat approaches. Further long-term analysis will be needed, but it seems that to the extent that any self-examination takes place it will probably only extend to Asia and feed a rising tide of Asian nationalism.

Given the context of the times, is there validity to the argument that World War II was an unavoidable defensive war against the Western nations? Japan argued at the start of the war that hostilities were sparked by “ABCD encirclement,” or economic and military encroachment by American, British, Chinese, and Dutch forces, and that Japan started the war “to defend its existence.” But just before the Asia-Pacific War began, on 26 November 1941, U.S. secretary of state Cordell Hull demanded in the “Hull Note” that Japanese troops withdraw from China and Indochina. He also refused to recognize the Chinese puppet government backed by Japan and called for Japan’s adherence to the principles of open access there. However, the Japanese government thought this demand failed to recognize Japanese sacrifice during four years of war with China, and saw it as a decisive moment in “the survival of the Japanese Empire.” Thus Japan made a historic decision to begin war against the United States and Britain. The contradictions of the “defensive war” thesis are obvious when we realize that it was precisely because Japan had invaded Asia that it came into conflict with the Western nations. Japan started its “defensive” Pacific War exactly when the United States demanded that Japan withdraw from Asia.

Many Japanese—even those who recognize that the Asia-Pacific War cannot be split into two—think it is unfair for Japan to be criticized when the Western powers also behaved aggressively to their own colonies. Certainly there was a trend in Japan in the 1930s to see itself as a “have not” country and demand redistribution of some of the colonies and overseas.

markets away from the Western "have" nations. The fact that Japan already held Taiwan and Korea contradicts this "have-not" theory. Nonetheless, these Japanese argue that nineteenth-century Japan joined the modern global political system at a time when Western nations commonly waged wars for colonies and overseas markets, and if Japan was to survive as a sovereign state it had no choice but to join in the "survival of the fittest" mentality. Thus Japan's attempt since the Meiji era to "escape Asia and join Europe" became Western-style imperialism. Japan was merely the student of imperialism and Europe was the teacher, so why should Japan be singled out for blame?"

This is a one-sided view. World War II was not just a "war among imperialists"; it was also an "antifascist war." In international society the voices calling for a democratic order began to restrain colonialist activity among the Allies. For example, in August 1941 U.S. president Franklin D. Roosevelt and British prime minister Winston Churchill signed the Atlantic Charter, which promised to support territorial integrity and the principles of "the right of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they will live." The charter unambiguously pledged the two leaders to extend these wartime goals to all the Allied countries after the war ended. Of course it took great resistance to the European nations to make these principles a reality. And the United States, itself a former British colony, signed a pact in 1934 promising the Philippines independence in one decade, both because of opposition to holding colonies and a desire for open international markets.

In the postwar era the United States has had military bases all over the world but has also championed a world structure based on free trade. Also, nationalist movements have triumphed in Asia and Africa, weakening colonial domination. When we consider these two changes, the thesis that we live in a "survival of the fittest" world concerns embedded in the Tokyo Tribunal verdict, has meant why should Japan be singled out for blame?"

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However, prewar Japan, with its sense of inferiority and inequality toward the Western "advanced countries," was unable to see that that kind of "survival of the fittest" world was already undergoing major change. Japan was so trapped by its thinking on this point that it set out to expand its colonies and sphere of power under the self-delusion that Japan was "liberating Asia." Nor did Japan go through the long, difficult decolonizing process experienced by Britain, France, and others after the war, because its colonies were shorn away after military defeat. That fact, together with the burial of Asian concerns embedded in the Tokyo Tribunal verdict, has meant that the colonial mentality is still vaguely present and tied in conservative minds to a "war of self-defense" against the United States and Britain.

At the same time, there is one more cause for the conservative hesitation to recognize that the Asia-Pacific War was a war of aggression—the difficulty in reconciling that admission with their own personal memories of those who died, compounded by their feelings of guilt as survivors toward the dead. For example, this sense of unfinished relations with the war dead is the kernel of literary critic Eto Jun's argument for the appropriateness of official visits by cabinet ministers to pray at the Yasukuni Shrine. He has insisted that "the land of Japan, the
scenery beloved by the Japanese people, and daily life all co-exist together with the dead in Japan. The left-wing novelist Nakano Shigeharu invented a similar attitude for the ex-middle-school principal who was the protagonist of his early postwar novel, Go-shaku no sake (Five cups of sake). Commenting on the ban by Occupation officials on public funerals for war dead, the principal said: “If we admit that we can’t use public buildings or govern ourselves, then we have let them die like dogs in an aggressive war.” Another author, Kobori Keiichiro, supported national prayer for the souls of the war dead because, “the souls of the war dead and others who died untimely deaths, without achieving their full measure of honor, wealth, and authority, must wander between heaven and earth.”

Actually, the circumstances of those deaths makes it very hard for others to criticize what the Japanese war dead did, no matter what those actions might have been. It is very dangerous to argue that if we recognize that the Asia-Pacific War was a war of aggression, then Japanese casualties “died like dogs.” Logically, if that were so, the only way to make their deaths meaningful would be victory in a future war. The “dog’s death thesis” is the psychological foundation for preparation to push the people into a war of revenge. This way of thinking has not been dominant in postwar Japan. Rather, showing a skepticism born out of their experience of having been mobilized by the wartime state, most people feel that the “war brought sorrow,” including a sense that unlike the past when the war dead were sacrificed to nationalism and warmongering, the future should be built on peace and international cooperation.

In Japan, as in the United States, the fiftieth anniversary of the end of World War II has been a time of rising nationalism and rethinking ideas about patriotism. However, Japanese memories of the war and subsequent actions relating to it are very different from those in the United States. While the United States was the victor and went on to practice “nuclear diplomacy,” Japan lost all its overseas possessions and has been at the forefront in opposing the use of nuclear weapons. In this picture Japanese survivors of the atomic bomb are demonstrating in June 1982 at the U.N. headquarters in New York during the Second Special Session on Disarmament on the control and reduction of nuclear weapons. Yet some fear that the focus on themselves as victims of nuclear weapons may distract the Japanese from taking responsibility for their own war crimes. This is a United Nations photo.

In any case, the fiftieth anniversary of defeat is bringing new levels of nationalism to Japan but also new and subtle changes in conservative thinking about the war.

Conclusion

Thus both the United States and Japan are turning toward nationalistic commemoration of the war on its fiftieth anniversary, but the forms and causes of that nationalism differ considerably in the two places. It is with these differences that I would like to conclude.

The first difference, of course, is that one nation is commemorating the war from the perspective of victor and another from that of loser. The United States is remembering the antifascist “holy war.” It is also recalling a complete, unconditional victory in a “good war” that brought the United States out of its long-term economic depression. One can say that World War II intensified a U.S. tendency to believe that war is an appropriate way to resolve international conflict. The shock of Pearl Harbor was a terrible experience but it snapped the United States out of its isolationist sense of security that it was a natural fortress, moated by the Atlantic and Pacific oceans, and united the country into accepting a large, standing military for overseas intervention.

In contrast, Japan lost not only 3.1 million people, including those killed in atomic and conventional air raids, but also all its overseas territories in the war. The home islands were also devastated by the bombings. This is why a broad spectrum of Japanese came to feel that “war brings sorrow.” Then the war crimes trials and postwar purges pinned the main war responsibility on the military, and so the status of the postwar self-defense forces has been extremely low.

Second, there is also a huge difference in attitudes toward atomic weapons. Postwar Japanese are conscious both of the enormity of the suffering at Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the way that the effects of those bombs differed from other weapons—such as the lingering cruel effects of radiation damage. The victims’ consciousness that “we are the only nation to have suffered atomic bombs” is strong there, as is antinuclear pacifism. (However, this very sentiment has contributed to the weak sense of responsibility for the Asian-Pacific War.) When the danger grew more pressing that atomic weapons might be used again during the Korean and Vietnam wars, the Japanese government passed the three nonnuclear principles prohibiting the production or possession of nuclear weapons or their entry into Japan by another country. This was an issue that transcended left-right divisions within Japan.

In contrast, the United States practiced what can be called “atomic diplomacy.” Being the sole nation with control over nuclear bombs gave the United States great confidence. Then when the United States and the USSR both had atomic weapons, they developed a nuclear standoff to protect themselves against potential atomic attack from each other. Even some people within the U.S. peace movement practiced what can be thought of as “nuclear pacifism,” arguing that nuclear weapons were a “necessary evil.” This, too, helped prevent serious reflection over having devastated Hiroshima and Nagasaki with nuclear bombs.

Third, the United States also experienced “defeat” in the Vietnam War, but those physical and psychological wounds were limited to the young men who were defeated in Vietnam itself. Of course the entire nation became wary of getting bogged down in the quagmire of long-term military engagements, as the term “Vietnam Syndrome” suggests. Yet there was no sense of a rejection of overseas military involvement itself. And many hoped that the victory in the Persian Gulf War would overcome even the Vietnam Syndrome. Certainly the Vietnam War greatly affected the thinking of U.S. scholars and influenced the revisionist New Left in various ways. Probably the split between academics and politicians in the current controversy over the Smithsonian’s atomic bomb exhibit in some ways parallels the great chasm between the effect of the Vietnam War on the academy and on other areas of U.S. life.

Again, very differently, Japanese concern with the Vietnam War was primarily over avoiding getting embroiled in the conflict. Nonetheless, the Vietnam War generation developed an interest in the Third World at that time. When in 1982 Asian nations protested the whitewash of official Japanese textbooks regarding Japanese predations in Asia, it was mainly this generation that supported these nations, and that has pushed ever since for recognition of Japanese atrocities and compensation to victims.

Of course there have been other important changes as well. In the 1980s as former Japanese soldiers reached retirement age they began to break their silence over their own wartime actions and their own culpability. Another decisive change is that many Asian countries have successfully democratized, profoundly influencing opportunities for their citizens to speak up about their own experiences. And in 1988 the United States government apologized and ordered compensation to Japanese-Americans incarcerated during the war. This move galvanized former Allied POWs as well. Then in January 1989 the death of the Showa emperor eased the way in the Japanese media for more open discussion of war responsibility. Then in January 1992, just before Prime Minister Miyazawa Kiichi was to make a state visit to the Republic of Korea, some scholars discovered documents proving that the wartime government and military had directly recruited and managed the former “military comfort women.” The Japanese government issued an apology to the affected countries. Since then the issue of unsettled compensation, not just to comfort women but to other victims too, has become a major topic of discussion in Japan.

Thus in the 1980s the commemoration in Japan of World War II began to change radically. The fiftieth anniversary of defeat is an occasion for renewed emphasis on nationalism but also may mark a shift in the nature of that nationalism. In a very static way over the decades past commemorations emphasized the difference in outlook between the wartime and the postwar generations. This means that in both Japan and the United States 1995 is a moment of change for ideas about patriotism, a moment that is likely to have a long-term and interactive significance for both nations.

Conservative politicians used to argue that Japan was "liberating Asia." The argument that Japan was the wartime aggressor toward Asia but not in general demonstrates a new two-war theory that indicates a new Asianism in Japan.
Politics of the War and Public History: Japan's Own Museum Controversy

by Ellen H. Hammond

As might be expected, the Japanese press has closely followed the controversy over plans to display the Enola Gay as part of an exhibit at the Smithsonian's National Air and Space Museum. When the museum curtailed its original plan to explore the effects of the atomic bombing on the ground, the Japanese media was quick to report the reactions of various public figures. Prime Minister Murayama Tomiichi, for example, expressed his regret at the change, which he deposed as an affront to the feelings of the Japanese people.

Interestingly, Murayama's own administration is currently embroiled in a similar controversy, one with many parallels to the Enola Gay exhibit. The Japanese government plans to construct a museum in central Tokyo, provisionally called the Peace Prayer Hall to Mourn the [Combatant] War Dead (Senbotsusha Tsuito Heiwa Kinenkan, called elsewhere in this issue the War Dead Peace Memorial Hall or the Peace Memorial Museum). While plans for the museum have a chameleonlike quality—they have changed repeatedly over the sixteen-year period since the beginning of the project—the conception that finally emerged during 1993 was of a facility that would function as both a memorial to Japan's war dead and as an exhibit space and research center about war, primarily Japan's wars in the modern era. The museum plan represents the first attempt by the national government to construct a facility dealing with these politically charged issues.

This project has many opponents. Their key complaint echoes Murayama's criticism of the Smithsonian; they charge that the government plan to commemorate only Japan's war dead is an insult to those in Asia and the Pacific who died as a result of Japanese aggression. Defenders of the project deny any need to apologize to Japan's former enemies; they wish only to celebrate the sacrifices made by Japanese during the war. The debate in both countries involves, on one side, the attempt to critically examine wartime decisions and actions and their effect overseas (and at home) and, on the other, the attempt to portray such examinations as unpatriotic and an insult to the memory of those who died in the conflict. While this polarization might be novel to Americans in the context of their participation in World War II (though not Vietnam), it has provided a central theme for Japanese politics for most of the postwar period.

The museum controversies in both countries share other themes as well. One is the desire to shape the understanding and meaning of the war for younger generations that have little or only distorted knowledge of the history of the period. Another is the elusiveness of historical objectivity and the problem of locating authority for the content of publicly funded historical exhibits. Finally, the social dynamics of the two debates offer a revealing look at the organizations and institutions that have been shaping political life in both countries in the postwar years.

The plan for the War Dead Peace Memorial Hall was first proposed to the Ministry of Health and Welfare in 1979 by the Association of Bereaved Families (Nihon Izoku-kai). The association is a right-wing pressure group that enjoys close ties to the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and the patronage of the imperial family. The group represents people whose relatives died during the war while serving in the military or in a related capacity. When it was first formed in 1947 as the Japanese Association for the Welfare of Families of War Casualties (Nihon Izoku Kosei Renmei), the group recognized the common experience of losing loved ones in war, reminding its members that Chinese and U.S. women also mourned their sons and husbands. After the organization regrouped in 1953 as the Association of Bereaved Families, it grew more conservative and has since sought to glorify the war. Association literature argues: "The Great East Asia War was a war of self-defense that Japan fought to protect the state, the nation's lives and properties."1 The group issued a strong protest in 1993 when Prime Minister Hosokawa Morihiro stated that Japan had waged a war of aggression. Association spokesmen such as vice chairman Suehiro Sakae strongly oppose any apology to other Asians and argue provocatively that Japan's history was "interrupted" in 1945, suggesting that only a return to presurrender institutions will allow the resumption of the nation's proper narrative.2

Association headquarters are in the basement of the Kudan Kaikan, a well-known landmark in central Tokyo that now serves as a restaurant and wedding hall facility. Less well known is that until 1957 this building was called the Soldiers Hall, and is, in

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2. For a detailed review of the museum planning process, see Tanaka Nobuhiro, " Kokuritsu 'Senbotsusha Tsuito Heiwa Kinenkan' koso (Doubts about the plan for the nationally funded "War Dead Peace Memorial Hall") Gijutsu to Ningen, Dec. 1993, pp. 22-42.
The association has long had a close relationship with the land and building rent free to the association, which has used the property ever since. The museum is to be constructed in the adjoining parking lot, just down the road from the Yasukuni Shrine, the most important site of worship in pre-surrender state Shinto.

The association has long had a close relationship with the Ministry of Health and Welfare, which administers pensions to injured soldiers and relatives of the dead and coordinates the continuing project of collecting the remains of Japanese who have died in battle overseas. The minister of welfare at the time the museum was proposed was powerful LDP politician Hashimoto Ryutaro; in 1995 he was the chairman of the association for its involvement in all aspects of the planning process and also its assistance in procuring the site.

The original proposal was for a facility called the War-Bereaved Children's Memorial Hall, and this is the concept that finally went to the Ministry of Finance for a budget review in 1992. During the process the building lost its original name but gained an enormous budget of 12.3 billion yen (145 million dollars), of which 2.068 billion yen (24.4 million dollars) was allocated in 1993. Despite the large sum involved, it was only during testimony in a Diet committee the following year that details of the project first began to emerge publicly. Ministry spokesmen stated that only Japanese war dead were to be honored and that no apology to other Asian countries was intended. It became clear that the plans included no discussion of Japan's invasion and occupation of other countries in the region nor the historical context of the war.

3. Ibid. This is at the June 1995 rate of 84.5 yen to one dollar.
As can be seen in the above wartime photo of a shrine service for Japanese soldiers killed in China, the Shinto religion has traditionally buttressed national identity and nationalism. Critics of Japan’s War Dead Peace Memorial Hall are concerned not only about its undemocratic decision-making and evasion of war responsibility, but also the use of government funding for a facility intended for prayer. The memorial hall’s provisional title means to pray, and earlier versions of the building plans actually used language drawn from Shinto ritual, bringing to mind presurrender state Shinto. Down the street from the memorial hall, the Yasukuni Shrine—the most important site of presurrender state Shinto and now the main place the spirits of Japan’s war dead are enshrined and where officials and other Japanese go to celebrate the war—opposes the memorial hall as a competing site that as a public institution might be forced to admit Japan’s war responsibility.

by Diet debate. On the basis of this statement a cooperative council was established in July 1993 by major historians organizations and other groups. This was the nucleus of the Committee to Consider the War Dead Peace Memorial Hall Problem, which has followed up on the initial statement with petitions to the government, signature campaigns, and symposiums.4

Other opponents have focused on the religious overtones of the project. The National Council of Bereaved Families for Peace, for example, in addition to opposing the undemocratic nature of the decision making and the evasion of war responsibility, has called attention to the problem of government funding for a facility intended for prayer. For a decade the project was called a memorial hall (kinenkan), but the provisional title later chosen by the ministry used the much less common character meaning “to pray” rather than “to commemorate.” A more accurate English translation would be Prayer Hall. Earlier versions of the building plans had actually used language drawn from Shinto ritual when discussing the memorial aspects of the building, bringing to mind presurrender state Shinto. The council, therefore, opposed the project for what it considered the dangerous blurring of the distinction between church and state. Spokesman Nishikawa Shigenori termed it a second Yasukuni Shrine.

The proposed project has also angered local residents, much like Narita Airport, where local activists have continued in opposition for well over a decade. In the present case, the ministry failed to alert neighborhood residents to the museum project (as required by law), prompting the formation of the Association to Protect the History and Scenery of the Kudan Area. The association has mobilized local residents in protest and received the backing of the ward legislative body. Repeated petitions to the ministry finally resulted in four explanatory sessions to those living in the area, but questions to ministry representatives failed to get much more than vague answers. One bureaucrat claimed that the ministry initially failed to hold public meetings because it did not know anyone actually lived in the area. Another argued that although some residents disliked the design, “that is a matter of individual taste and no existing law can deal with that kind of issue.”5

The local residents want to preserve their historic neighborhood and are also concerned that the proposed 60-meter

4. The original statement is reprinted in Rekishi Hyoron, Oct. 1993, pp. 97–100.

S-shaped building might rain down glass and debris during an earthquake, blocking access to their evacuation area in the park next to the site. The stance of the ministry is that all legalities have been observed and that the project can go ahead at any time.

Surprisingly, another neighborhood resident—Yasukuni Shrine—also opposes the project. The Association of Bereaved Families has actively lobbied for years in support of official visits by politicians and civil servants to the shrine, where the spirits of Japan's war dead are enshrined and the war itself celebrated. Despite this, in December 1993 Yasukuni delivered petitions to both the Ministry of Health and Welfare and the association, protesting the location of the museum and the fact that the project ignores Yasukuni's own role in commemorating military casualties of the war. Shrine representatives also fear that precisely because it is a public institution this new museum will be unable to maintain Yasukuni's own adamant stance that Japan has no need to apologize for its wartime conduct. They fear that the government will be pressured into statements of remorse by groups such as the historians, arguing that the government has waffled on just this point previously in its acceptance of the verdicts handed down by the Tokyo War Crimes Tribunal. Yasukuni, which has itself been a flash point in the postwar deadlock over issues of war responsibility and the separation of church and state, ironically enough is now pointing with concern to the government's foray into religious affairs.

The museum controversies in both countries share the desire to shape the understanding and meaning of the war for younger generations that have little or only distorted knowledge of the history of the period.

Others formerly sympathetic to the ministry's conception of the museum have deserted the beleaguered project. After unsuccessfully trying to incorporate a focus on Asian war victims into the ministry's project, three members of the internal advisory committee for the planning (scholars Hosoya Chihiro and Hata Ikuhiko, and critic Kamisaka Fuyuko) have resigned and publicly criticized the ministry for its unilateral decision making and standpoint toward the war. It is highly unusual for members of such carefully selected bodies to resign; it also leaves the committee with no professional researchers or historians. (At no point have the official planning committees had members with training or experience in curatorial work.) The growing chorus of opposition finally led the ministry to back down. In February it announced that construction would be deferred for two years and the planners would return to the original (vague) concept of a facility for war-bereaved children. Meanwhile, the Murayama administration, rather than confronting the ministry, chose instead to inaugurate a rival project. Hosoya Chihiro is in charge of an Asian History Document Center (Ajia Rekishi Shiro Senta), which is being planned under cabinet supervision with the explicit intention of recognizing the suffering caused by Japan during the war.

Whereas the scholars and organizations in the United States who supported the Smithsonian's original exhibit concept decried the politicization of the museum planning process, in Japan similar groups immediately called for further politicization—a national discussion to replace exclusive control by the bureaucracy. In the United States, despite the "culture wars" that have engulfed publicly funded museums and other institutions, there is still a commitment to the ideal of a "civic space" where professional curators and historians can debate the issues and incorporate the advice of advisory bodies or public opinion, but still have ultimate authority for public art displays and public history. In Japan the intellectuals who first protested the museum plans accorded no importance to the role of curators or historians, calling instead for consultation with "the people." While some historians organizations later demanded that professional expertise be respected in the decision-making process, there is general support for opening the discussion as widely as possible and locating authority within the Diet and the cabinet. (This probably would have been limited to the Diet if the Liberal Democratic Party were still in power.) Project critics implicitly deny the possibility of any neutral or objective view of the thorny issues involved, and their solution is to make decision making thoroughly part of the democratic process.

The controversy in Japan has naturally generated a huge amount of commentary, ranging from right-wing hate mail and nuisance calls directed at museum critics to editorials and columns in the press. Many have noted in passing the similarities the museum problem shares with the Enola Gay exhibit. Some have linked the two controversies even more closely. A columnist in one of Japan's major dailies asserted that Japan is still incapable of officially recognizing its war responsibility and for this reason cannot freely lay claim to its status as the first nation to suffer from a nuclear bomb. Such comments suggest not only the degree to which the two national debates are entangled but also the subtle persistence of attitudes that will make it even more difficult to transcend the framing of these issues in nationalistic terms.

For more information on the movement to protest this museum, contact:

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Peace Memorial Hall Problem)
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6. Ichikawa Hayami, "Rekishi ni me o tsunuru kinenkan" (The memorial hall that ignores history), Asahi, 10 Feb. 1995, p. 4.
Proposal for an International Appeal for Global Peace on the Occasion of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the End of World War II

by the Japanese Committee to Appeal for World Peace, '95

Fifty years are about to pass since the conclusion of World War II, which brought unimaginable suffering to peoples throughout the world. The passage of months and years that now amount to half a century compels us to mourn all of the war's victims, irrespective of which side they were on during the war, and to renew our resolution never to repeat the tragedy of war.

It is regrettable, however, that among the various events being planned throughout the world in commemoration of the fiftieth-year anniversary, there are some that threaten to exacerbate mutual mistrust by emphasizing the differing positions at the time of the war. Forty years ago, in 1955, Bertrand Russell and Albert Einstein warned that the elimination of war will remain difficult so long as our sense of common humanity remains ambiguous and abstract.

As individuals engaged in scholarly and cultural activities in Japan, we believe it necessary to first clearly promote self-reflection on Japan's war responsibility in the Asia-Pacific War. Based on this, we then wish to present an international appeal that clarifies common ground for working toward global peace. By obtaining the support of many people throughout the world, it is our desire to turn this fiftieth-year anniversary into an opportunity to strengthen international public opinion in support of world peace.

As a prelude to our proposal for an international appeal, we offer the following self-reflections concerning Japan's war responsibility:

First, it is obvious that the Asia-Pacific War began with the invasion of China, starting with the Manchurian Incident of September 1931, and subsequent military invasion of Southeast Asian countries that were European and U.S. colonies. We recognize that apology and compensation for damages to the Asian peoples whom we victimized are necessary.

Second, at that time in Japan there was a tendency to regard the European and American colonial powers as "have" (as opposed to "have-not") countries, and to demand a redistribution of colonial possessions. Such an attitude neglected the demand for national self-determination that had been on the rise since World War I, however, and is anachronistic in the post World War II world. Keeping in mind the fact that 1995 is also the one hundredth year since the conclusion of the first Sino-Japanese War, we believe self-reflection is necessary concerning Japan's own colonial rule, which started in Formosa (Taiwan) in 1895 and was extended to Korea in 1910.

Third, against a background of confrontation concerning Japan's aggression against China and Indochina, Japan commenced war against the Allied Powers in December 1941 with a surprise attack on Pearl Harbor (while a notice to terminate Japan-U.S. negotiations was delayed in the Japanese embassy), coupled with a military assault on the Malay Peninsula. We give serious consideration to the fact that these actions have caused prolonged U.S. distrust of Japan. If Japan is to take a position of seeking peaceful solutions to disputes in today's world, we believe that it is more than ever necessary to clearly self-reflect upon our responsibility for starting the war in the past.

Fourth, heartfelt apology and self-reflection are necessary concerning the mass slaughter of civilians symbolized by the Nanjing Massacre, as well as the atrocious treatment of Allied prisoners of war and civilian captives such as took place in the Bataan Death March.

As individuals engaged in scholarly and cultural activities in Japan, we believe it necessary to first clearly promote self-reflection on Japan's war responsibility in the Asia-Pacific War. Based on this, we then wish to present an international appeal that clarifies common ground for working toward global peace.

The Asia-Pacific War, which caused enormous suffering in neighboring countries, also was accompanied by indescribable sacrifices on the part of the Japanese people, as symbolized by Hiroshima and Nagasaki. As a result, a common consciousness of "no more war" became widespread in post-defeat Japan, and the country chose the path of concentrating on economic recovery while as much as possible avoiding foreign disputes.

As a result, until quite recently Japanese have tended to emphasize their own victimization while neglecting their role as
victimizers who brought enormous suffering to foreigners and foreign countries. That is, it cannot be denied that peace consciousness in postwar Japan has had the limitation of being self-centered. This can be seen, for example, in the fact that postwar government compensation policies for individual war victims have applied only to Japanese.

In the 1990s, however, problems such as the "military comfort women" became widely known, and Japanese public opinion in support of apologizing to foreign war victims and providing compensation to them has risen conspicuously. Also, in recent years local public peace-memorial centers such as those in Hiroshima and Okinawa have begun to address not only Japanese suffering but also the suffering of non-Japanese. In this fiftieth year since Japan's defeat, we recognize that it is necessary to strengthen this trend whereby peace consciousness transcends the boundaries of preoccupation with one country.

Thus, on this historically important juncture of the fiftieth anniversary of Japan's defeat, we urge the Japanese government and Diet to carry out the following five-part agenda:

1. By 15 August 1995 officially do the following: clearly articulate the government's self-reflection on Japan's responsibility for past colonial rule as well as the Asia-Pacific War, which caused enormous suffering both outside and within the country; express renewed resolution to uphold Article 9 of the Constitution and never invade the territory of other countries; resolve to act as a thoroughly peaceful nation by taking the initiative to work for peaceful dispute resolution and armaments reduction in the future.

2. Make efforts to make the miserable realities of the war known to the world by, first, releasing to the public all official documents and pertinent materials possessed by the Japanese side, and second, assisting in the identification and maintenance of materials pertaining to war damages in other countries, especially in Asia.

3. Set up appropriate mechanisms within the government and Diet to quickly investigate war damages to foreigners; apologize to such confirmed victims and provide early compensation to them; and quickly take measures to also establish national compensation to Japanese civilian war victims who have been neglected up to now, such as victims of conventional air raids as well as the atomic bombs.

4. To ensure that younger generations without war experience will possess accurate historical consciousness, make efforts to provide historical education concerning the Asia-Pacific War based on sound scholarship; also, in constructing memorial facilities such as the presently contemplated Peace Memorial Museum, always include exhibits with the causes and realities of suffering in foreign countries.

5. Make widely known to the world the terrible human experience of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki atomic-bomb victims, and also the realities of survivors of postwar nuclear experiments such as in the Bikini Incident of 1954. At the same time, with the ultimate end in view of prohibiting the use of nuclear weapons by international law and attaining the early abolishment of nuclear arsenals, take the lead by passing legislation affirming Japan's three non-nuclear principles of prohibiting the production or possession of nuclear weapons or their being brought into Japan by another country.

With the understanding that we ourselves will engage in self-reflection on Japan's war responsibility, and will present the above concrete proposals to the Japanese government and Diet, we offer the International Appeal for Peace that is presented on the following page.

28 March 1995

Arai Shinichi (Surugadai University, history)
Awaya Kentaro (Rikkyo University, Japanese modern history)
Fujisawa Akira (history)
Fushimi Koki (past president, Science Congress of Japan, physics)
Hattori Manabu (professor emeritus, Rikkyo University, physics)
Ide Magoroku (Japan Pen Club, novelist)
Igarashi Takeshi (Tokyo University, American history and government)
Imai Seiichi (professor emeritus, Yokohama City University, Japanese political history)
Irokawa Daikichi (Tokyo University of Economics, history)
Ishida Takeshi (Yachiyo International University; professor emeritus, Tokyo University, political science)
Ishi Mayako (Keisen Jogakuen College, International Relations)
Ito Naruhiko (Chuo University, history of social thought)
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Saito Takehi (Gakushuin University, contemporary European history)
Sato Takeo (Takushoku University, contemporary German history)
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Yamada Eiji (physics)
Yoshida Yutaka (Hitotsubashi University, contemporary Japanese history)
Yoshimi Yoshiaki (Chuo University, contemporary Japanese history)
Yui Daizaburo (Hitotsubashi University, history)
International Appeal for Global Peace on the Occasion of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the End of World War II

It soon will be fifty years since the end of World War II, which caused enormous suffering to peoples throughout the world. We believe that this fiftieth anniversary should not be observed in ways that reinforce the enmity and mistrust associated with different positions during the war.

Rather, it should be commemorated in a manner that turns the tragic war experience in the direction of building future peace for humanity. With this in mind, we propose the following eight principles:

1. Upon the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the end of the war, we pledge that, once having clearly established the responsibility of the Axis countries that started the war, we will mourn all war victims irrespective of nationality or race and make efforts to ensure that such enormous sacrifices never will be repeated.

2. We take seriously the fact that even today, after fifty years, many questions remain concerning accurate numbers of war victims and the actual extent of war damages. Thus, we urge the countries involved to continue to investigate these matters and release pertinent information both domestically and internationally.

3. We also take note of the fact that there still remain war victims who even to the present day have not received appropriate apologies and just compensation. We thus request that the countries involved investigate these matters and hasten to extend apologies and compensation for individual damages that are confirmed.

4. Recalling that one of the causes of the war was mutual mistrust among the various countries, we consider it important to promote international exchanges concerning historical education, and the like, with the ultimate objective of promoting mutual trust as well as education for peace and human rights in all countries.

5. In making available materials that show the realities of war suffering and damages, we believe that such presentations should reflect sound scholarship. At the same time, efforts should be made to enlarge the common ground of historical perception by mutually exchanging materials and information even when positions during the war may have been antagonistic. In particular, in the case of the Asia-Pacific theater, more exhibitions should be held in Japan to publicize atrocities against foreigners symbolized by such incidents as the Nanjing Massacre and the Bataan Death March. In the United States, exhibitions depicting such matters as the atomic-bomb damage in Hiroshima and Nagasaki should be promoted.

6. Keeping in mind that the war marked the final defeat of fascism, we think it important to reaffirm the value of freedom, human rights, and democracy for all people, and to commit ourselves to eliminate discrimination based on race, nationality, religion, or gender.

7. We give serious consideration to the fact that in the final stage of the war atomic bombs were used for the first time in history, victimizing many noncombatants and symbolically inaugurating a nuclear era in which the very existence of humanity is imperiled. We deem it necessary to increase recognition of the inhumanity of nuclear weapons and work for their early abolishment.

8. To turn the lessons of the tragic war in the direction of future world peace, it is our hope that each nation, taking advantage of organizations such as the United Nations, energetically pursues efforts to overcome the poverty and environmental destruction that tend to give rise to conflict.

It is our hope that many people, irrespective of nationality or race, will support these eight principles and make efforts to realize them in their own country. In working for a lasting peace for all humanity, we believe it is important to mutually understand the different meanings of peace consciousness that may exist among different peoples. Thus, in addition to soliciting your support of this appeal, we also welcome your comments.

Japan Committee to Appeal for World Peace, '95
c/o Kibata Yoichi
Tokyo University
Komaba Meguro-ku
Tokyo 153, Japan
Tel. and fax: 81-3-5454-6305
Call for a National Teach-in on Hiroshima

by the Historians’ Committee for Open Debate on Hiroshima

As historians and scholars who share a concern for the honest portrayal of important historical events, we are profoundly disturbed by the character of the public discourse occasioned by the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum’s exhibit on the Enola Gay and the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. This exhibit has now been drastically scaled-down and in its place the museum intends to display merely the bomber’s forward fuselage. Any materials which might have provided a historical context to the plane employed in the first combat use of the atomic bomb have been purged.

Last year, under relentless political pressure, the curators of the Air and Space Museum were required to censor their own exhibit script. For example, the fact that there has always been a debate over whether the atomic bombings were necessary to bring about an early end to the Pacific war without an invasion of Japan was removed from the canceled exhibit script.

Archival documents essential to an understanding of the historical debate over the atomic bombings likewise were removed from the exhibit. We refer here to such documents as the 27 June 1945 memo from Undersecretary of the Navy Ralph Bard reporting his “feeling that before the bomb is actually used against Japan that Japan should have some preliminary warning . . . The position of the United States as a great humanitarian nation and the fair play attitude of our people generally is responsible in the main for this feeling.” Also eliminated from the script were statements by General Dwight D. Eisenhower and Admiral William D. Leahy that reflected their opinion that the bombings were unnecessary.

By acceding to such censorship the Smithsonian became associated with a transparent attempt at a form of historical cleansing. The fact that archival documents and artifacts were removed from a planned exhibit under political pressure is scandalous. The fastidious care taken by the Smithsonian to ensure that each bolt, each gauge and detail of the Enola Gay is a perfect reflection of the true artifact stands in extraordinary contrast to the Smithsonian’s complete disregard of historical documents and scholarly literature on the atomic bombings.

On 22 October 1994 the Executive Board of the Organization of American Historians approved a resolution stating:

The Organization of American Historians condemns threats by members of Congress to penalize the Smithsonian Institution because of the controversial exhibition on World War II and the dropping of the atomic bomb. The Organization of American Historians further deplores the removal of historical documents and revision of interpretations of history for reasons outside the professional procedures and criteria by which museum exhibitions are created.

Additional efforts were made by numerous historians to persuade the Smithsonian to take the exhibit script out of the hands of the political censors and return it to the control of professional curators and the museum’s own board of historical advisors. These efforts have been largely rebuffed: instead, political pressures on the museum and its curators are certain to increase as the Smithsonian’s governing body, the Board of Regents, investigates the handling of the exhibit with the promise that Congress will hold hearings on the matter if the board’s findings are not considered sufficient.

Ironically, even after extensive rewrites to expurgate the exhibit script of information deemed unacceptable by the politically powerful, the Smithsonian found itself unable to satisfy its critics. Now the entire text of the main exhibit has been canceled, and what remains is an airplane [and information about the airplane and crew and some debatable statements about the purpose and results of the bombings].

It was unconscionable that as a result of pressures from outside the museum, the Smithsonian allowed its own curators to be censored. It is now equally reprehensible that the entire history of the Hiroshima bombing has been censored.

As historians and scholars, we therefore believe the time has come to call upon our colleagues at universities across the country to participate in a National Teach-in on Hiroshima, both to protest the Smithsonian’s surrender to political censorship and to educate Americans on the full range of scholarly debate regarding the atomic bombings of Japan fifty years ago. To that purpose, we call upon universities to schedule symposiums, debates, and teach-ins prior to, or coinciding with, the scheduled June 1995 unveiling of the Enola Gay, and to coordinate these events with the Historians’ Committee for Open Debate on Hiroshima.

February 1995

Historians’ Committee for Open Debate on Hiroshima
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Ironically the cancellation of the planned Enola Gay exhibit may end up doing more to increase awareness of the issues around the decision to drop the bomb and the launching of the nuclear era than the exhibit itself would have done. We do not know how many teach-ins have taken place, but even a U.S. commercial television network, ABC, had a program—Peter Jennings Reporting: Hiroshima: Why the Bomb Was Dropped—that commemorated the end of World War II in the bold and thoughtful way originally planned by the Smithsonian curators. There have also been direct actions at the Smithsonian's Air and Space Museum, such as those shown in these pictures. In the photo above demonstrators with the Enola Gay Coalition of the War Resisters League stage a vigil in front of the Enola Gay fuselage on 28 June 1995, the opening day of the exhibit. Wearing "NEVER AGAIN" tee shirts, they hold up pictures of the aftermath of the bombings, such as "boy burned to death," "survivors awaiting medical attention," and "Ujikami Cathedral in ruins," and a poster quoting Admiral William Leahy: "We have adopted the ethical standards common to the barbarians of the Dark Ages." About seventy-five people participated in the demonstration, and twenty-one were arrested. This photo is by Ed Hedemann of the War Resisters League, which has also developed an alternative exhibit kit for local communities. The War Resisters League can be contacted at 339 Lafayette Street, New York, NY 10012; telephone, (212) 228-0450; fax, (212) 228-6193; and e-mail, wrl@igc.apc.org

On 2 July 1995 three demonstrators were arrested after pouring ashes and blood on the Enola Gay fuselage. About fifteen others came in support, with some handing out leaflets and holding up a banner on the steps of the Air and Space Museum, as can be seen in this picture. The demonstration was organized by the Atlantic Life Community and the Washington, D.C., section of Pax Christi, and participants came from six eastern states. This photo is by and courtesy of Joe Morton.
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This is a personal narrative, not a researched report. I visited war memorials on two trips to Vietnam, separated by fifteen years of history and living. Without having conducted interviews or sought information in documents about the purposes and uses of the memorials, I recount here my observations—as an American whose life was permanently shaped by my involvement in the antiwar movement. I hope that by reflecting on what I saw I may contribute to understanding, but these observations are only fragments of a story that is larger and deeper than I have been able to address. As I neither speak nor read Vietnamese and was constrained by group dynamics on both visits, my observations were limited to what I could take in visually and through partial interpretation. I hope they are of use.

by Martha Kendall Winnacker

Son My

In 1977 my visit to Son My, the site of the “My Lai” massacre, was a pilgrimage of expiation, a duty twisted by pain and guilt that was the focus of a complicated journey to Vietnam by four Americans representing a coalition of peace organizations. To get to Hanoi we flew for twenty-four hours on an Aeroflot turboprop from Moscow with stops in Tashkent, Karachi, and Dacca. From Hanoi we flew to Danang, where the hangars still displayed stenciled U.S. signs, and U.S. planes and helicopters still sat on the tarmac. Then we drove in an air-conditioned Toyota van, first to the district headquarters at Son Tinh for an official briefing, then to the site where a hospital would be built with the funds we brought, and finally, to Son My.

Nine years after U.S. soldiers destroyed the village and killed over 400 people, mostly women, children, and the old, the landscape was open and bleak. It was just one year since the site had been made into a monument. A newly installed statue, a heroic woman, twice life-size, dominated the scene with one fist raised to the sky and a stare fixed eternally on the horizon. Her other arm cradled a dead or dying child and at her feet an old man supported a mortally wounded younger one. There were no soft lines on the statue or in the landscape. A graceless, concrete-block structure housed a museum. In one room was a formica-topped table; in the entryway, on U.S. military maps of “Pinkville,” arrows described troop movements. High on the wall a black marble tablet listed the names of 504 victims in columns of gold type. Beside each name, a number recorded the person’s age. On the walls of the two exhibit rooms were the ghastly and familiar photographs first published in Life magazine. Corpses. A girl in a white shirt peering in terror from behind her grandmother. GIs igniting large rice-winnowing baskets with cigarette lighters. Helicopters. The photographs were not original prints but pages from published magazines and newspapers protected behind glass plates. Glass cases held artifacts: a conical hat pierced by a bullet, crockery bowls, a pot.

Although the images had become icons of the antiwar movement and had helped drive it, their familiarity as office “decor” on daily display had also dulled their impact. They had become abstract and symbolic even while they fueled indignation, rage, and pity. There was something both profoundly disturbing and strangely comforting about the encounter with the American photographs, still encased in protective distance, at the site where the corpses had lain. There were no Vietnamese photographs, because only U.S. Army photographer Ron Haeberle carried a camera on 16 March 1968. As we gathered around the table for the obligatory greetings and a fact-filled introduction that marked each of our visits in Vietnam the distance collapsed.

Our host was a young woman wearing a white shirt and black peasant pants, her hair a long braid down her back, her face stern and unforgiving. As a fourteen-year-old girl in 1968, she had left the village early in the morning of 16 March to go to the market. When she returned, her family was dead and her village destroyed; she had then slipped away to join the guerrilla forces in the jungle. While we four Americans sat with our three Hanoi
The Son My memorial statue in 1977, nine years after U.S. soldiers destroyed the village of Son My and killed over 400 people. Installed in 1976, the statue stood alone in a barren landscape that had not recovered from being bulldozed and evacuated and did not appear to be inhabited. The guide in the small cinder-block museum a few dozen yards away was a guerrilla veteran whose stern and unforgiving manner left no opening for pleasantries or conciliatory gestures. Unless noted otherwise, the photos accompanying this article are by and courtesy of Martha Winnacker.

escorts around the table, she ushered in two old women who told us in voices broken by weeping how their children and relatives had been killed. They finished their stories by asking who would take care of them in their old age. A heavy, awkward silence swallowed the room when the telling was done, broken finally when one of our group made a clumsy statement to the effect that as peace activists we would work to prevent such things from happening again.

In 1992 I returned to Son My as part of a group of ten U.S. educators on a tour organized by the U.S.-Indochina Reconciliation Project. Vietnam was becoming a destination for adventure tourists, and two U.S. guidebooks listed Son My as a place to visit. A marker indicated the turnoff from the highway. Bearing a bas-relief image of the statue—an image of an image—the marker identified a dirt road like hundreds of others leaving the paved highway to enter the village world. It was narrow, bumpy, winding through rice fields and coconut palms, and lined sporadically with tiny open-air shops. Household courtyards were visible through the trees—carefully packed dirt where grain is threshed, animals and children wander, and chores are done. Children born long after the last soldiers rampaged through their villages waved at our van, grinning broadly as they called out “hello” and “okay.” There was a market along the way on the left—an open space where local vendors come to sell fruit, vegetables, textiles, hardware to their neighbors. On the right further along was a series of brick kilns—tall, narrow structures surrounded by stacks of red bricks baked from the soil that lies under the rice paddies. In 1977 the landscape was open, just beginning to recover from nearly a decade as a free-fire zone, most of whose residents had been removed after 1968 and forced to live in refugee camps or to eke out a living in the cities after their villages were bulldozed. In 1977 the houses were raw and new, and piles of military scrap still littered the roadside. In 1992 the road had a settled feel. Its villages were firmly rooted, linked by dense strands of interaction made visible in the market and held to the earth by growing things—trees, rice, vines—and, surely, by generations of memory and buried ancestors.

The Son My memorial statue in 1977, nine years after U.S. soldiers destroyed the village of Son My and killed over 400 people. Installed in 1976, the statue stood alone in a barren landscape that had not recovered from being bulldozed and evacuated and did not appear to be inhabited. The guide in the small cinder-block museum a few dozen yards away was a guerrilla veteran whose stern and unforgiving manner left no opening for pleasantries or conciliatory gestures. Unless noted otherwise, the photos accompanying this article are by and courtesy of Martha Winnacker.

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The separate treatment of Vietnamese heroism and enemy war crimes illustrates the political uses of war displays, but the incense burners and the garden at Son My may represent the lasting human need to do honor and seek comfort.

In 1977 we knew we had reached Son My when our van stopped in the open space between the statue and the museum. In 1992 the end of road was marked by a rusty iron gate that had to be opened before we could drive in. There was a caretaker to open it. Inside, Son My had become a park. A green lawn was accented with beds of flowers, a path, trimmed bushes. On the right of the path, stylized marble statues, each a half-size representation of a man, woman, or child, were scattered among the plants, marking spots where a body or bodies were found. Half-burned sticks of incense stuck out of small burners in front of some of them, while patches of young corn surrounded others. The monumental statue now stood in front of palm trees. Behind it, at an angle to the drainage ditch where the largest number of bodies had lain, was a mosaic mural: airplanes with teeth, flying bullets, dying bodies, and large stylized tears that extended below the frame of the image, seemingly to sink into the soil. Beyond, where in 1977 bare land extended to the horizon, eucalyptus, coconut palm, and banana trees filled the space. Across rice fields and through trees, houses were visible in all directions, but not too close. In the distance people went about their business on foot.

The museum had some additions to the outside structure, but the interior was the same: the same photographs and maps
hung on the wall, older, beginning to fade. The pamphlet handed out at the museum was in English and was produced in March 1976 by Ngia Binh Province’s Commission for the Denunciation of the U.S. Imperialists and Their Henchments (sic) War Crimes. Most likely, although I do not remember, we received the same pamphlet in 1977. All that was new inside was some wooden sculpture, bas-reliefs in natural wood in a style that reminded me of the Pacific Northwest. Elongated, stylized faces and huge tears burst the framed areas of the images.

It was the human interpretation that had changed from witness to professional lecture. The narrator wore a blue ao dai decorated with embroidered flowers; her hair was short and permed; she wore makeup and used a pointer to explain the movement of U.S. soldiers and the sequence of the killings. She said she was from a nearby village, a graduate in museum studies from Hanoi University; her title was curator. One of her aunts was killed in the massacre, but she mentioned it without emotion. At the end of her presentation, the guest book was passed around for our signatures, and we were encouraged to make donations. Outside, our Vietnamese interpreter handed a pack of incense to the leader of our group—herself too young to remember “My Lai,” and asked her to make an offering in front of the large statue. Awkward, uncertain of the ritual, she stood on the step, bowed with the incense between her palms, and placed it, one stick at a time, into the sand-filled urn at the statue’s foot.

Son My has become a focus for symbolic gestures of reconciliation: foreigners come here to visit, money has been donated, and the garden has been planted. The incense sticks before the garden statues are testimony that local people remember individuals who died. I did not have a chance to ask when the mural, the small statues, and the gardens were added. Nor who the artists were who did the wood carvings. Nor did I ask who comes to the museum other than the foreigners whose names we saw in the guest book. Fewer and fewer people remember for themselves what happened here, and for the children of the 1990s the story must be a legend.

What must this place and its commemoration mean to those who do remember? Even in 1992 I did not know that in 1969 investigators for the Peers Commission, charged by the U.S. Army to find out what had happened, summoned Son My survivors to look at the photographs and identify both the dead and the living:

Villagers were shown enlargements of Haeberle’s color pictures, and the survivors quickly identified relatives and the exact location of the photographs. A former chief of the hamlet, Do Tan Nhon, 29, picked out his own daughter, Do Thi Kim Be, aged 7, as the terrified child wearing a white blouse, photographed seconds before her execution. The woman in the picture trying to protect her was his mother, Nguyen Thi Cung, aged 54. Nhon had been working away from the hamlet for the South Vietnamese authorities in Son Tinh when the massacre happened.1

For the Peers Commission the images were evidence rather than commemoration, as, I suspect, was the creation of the museum. For Son My survivors, by 1969 scattered in refugee camps, the horrific task of looking at the photographs was at the same time their opportunity to be heard. Their initial complaints to local Republic of Vietnam government officials had been dismissed as communist propaganda motivated by a desire to obtain compensation from the Americans.

Two years after my second visit to Son My, I found in the opening pages of the newly translated Vietnamese novel The Sorrow of War an account that may resemble the way the dead of Son My live on among those who remember them. Author Bao Ninh opens his tale with a scene in 1976: Kien, a member of a “Missing in Action body-collecting team,” returns to the

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A triumphant MIG fighter perched atop the remains of a downed B-52. This exhibit in the courtyard of the Army Museum in Hanoi remained unchanged from 1977 to 1992. The disparity in scale between the small MIG and the giant B-52 may well symbolize the celebratory way official Vietnamese history interprets a history of conflict with giants.

The War Museums in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City

The museums in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City are different. Neither embedded in continuing daily life nor on the site of the events they portray, both are historical displays whose purposes are clearly political. Neither had changed significantly in the fifteen years between my visits, despite adding new chapters to the stories they tell. The memories and feelings they evoke are symbolic rather than immediate, and they mix evidence and commemoration on a scale that is, on the whole, historic rather than personal.

The military museum in Hanoi is celebratory. Located in the old citadel of Hanoi, its most conspicuous exhibit is a mountain of rubble—the remains of a single B-52—topped by a small MIG fighter plane. Its buildings are arrayed around a courtyard, which includes a garden, the MIG/B-52 exhibit, and tanks that participated in key battles in the final victory over the U.S.-backed forces of Saigon. In 1992 there were more tanks than in 1977, veterans of the 1979 war against China, but the courtyard setting was otherwise familiar. The interior exhibits feature photographs and artifacts documenting victories and the persistence of Vietnamese fighters—low-tech, but imbued with patriotism and loyalty. The single largest indoor display is a model of the Dienbienphu Valley and its surrounding mountain ranges. At least twenty feet square, the model is surrounded by a low railing behind which are benches. In 1992...
we joined an elementary school class and a miscellaneous sprinkling of adults on the benches while lights were dimmed and a recording narrated (in Vietnamese) the events of the Dienbienphu campaign. In a control booth at one corner of the room, in a ritual unchanged since 1977, an elderly man manually operated switches to light up various parts of the model in a simulation of the movement of Vietnamese troops through tunnels and trenches to tighten their encirclement of the French fortress. Even without understanding the narration, the lights conveyed the gist of the story. At the culminating moment, a spring mechanism on top of the fortress popped up a miniature Vietnamese flag.

Among the more conspicuously displayed artifacts inside the museum were loaded freight bicycles that had carried supplies down the Ho Chi Minh Trail to soldiers in the south during both the French and U.S. wars, and camouflage-painted sensors from the “McNamara Line” intended to detect motion on the trail so U.S. planes could bomb productively. For the most part the exhibits in the Army Museum glorified Vietnamese military accomplishments rather than gloating over defeated enemies, and few of them portrayed the brutal face of battle. A collection of U.S. battle gear, including two helmets, a backpack, and some weapons in a glass case, was a jarring exception. With visible anger and pain, one member of my 1992 group assumed that the personal equipment had been taken from dead Americans and responded to the exhibit as both ghoulish and callous. Yet the display was oddly disembodied, requiring the observer to give it meaning: was it a heartless flaunting of battlefield trophies to be celebrated by the victorious and stir bitterness in the defeated? Or a poignant commemoration like that conjured by an empty helmet hung on a crude wooden cross?

Although we did not see them, this museum rests on a foundation of archives and collections. As the Vietnamese made increasing concessions to U.S. Missing in Action hunters in late 1992, this museum was the location at which the U.S. government team examined thousands of pages of documents related to the incidents in which U.S. flyers disappeared.

Sanitization is not characteristic of the War Crimes Museum (formerly the Museum of American War Crimes) in Ho Chi Minh City, located in the Gia Long Palace, home of the French governor-in-residence of the colony of Cochinchina. Unlike the Army Museum, which honored victories at least in part to build the morale of its visitors, the War Crimes Museum was established shortly after the Communist victory in 1975 with the clear intention of persuading the people of Saigon that the forces they had supported were evil. The museum was supported by a Commission of Investigation on U.S. War Crimes. In contrast to the celebration in Hanoi, this museum stressed horrors: photographs from “My Lai”; jars of formaldehyde containing the corpses of stillborn fetuses with gross deformities attributed to U.S. herbicides; images and testimony from French and U.S. prisons. There were also biographical portraits of major collaborators, with detailed documentation of their crimes in text panels, photographs, and storyboards.

In the interim between 1977 and 1992 the museum had added a room devoted to post-1975 enemies. The focus was primarily on
China as the enemy, and displays recorded both cross-border military actions and alleged fifth-column subversion from within. Among the images were photographs of Chinese-Vietnamese demonstrating their loyalty to the Vietnamese government and hatred of the Chinese state. A smaller narrative strand depicted U.S.-based attacks on Vietnam through networks of overseas Vietnamese (Viet Kieu) and included antigovernment fliers alleged to have been smuggled into the country by Viet Kieu. Captions were written in Vietnamese, English, and Chinese. Like the older part of the museum, the new room excoriated an external enemy and accused local people of collaboration based on family and ethnic ties to the foe. It could be interpreted as a cautionary note to those with international families that they would be watched for potential hostile activity.

Unlike Hanoi's Army Museum, which honored victories at least in part to build the morale of its visitors, the War Crimes Museum in Ho Chi Minh City was established shortly after the Communist victory in 1975 with the clear intention of persuading the people of Saigon that the forces they had supported were evil.

Concluding Thoughts

For Americans, especially those of us who opposed or participated in the war, Vietnamese commemorations of it bear many layers of meaning. In visits to the three places described here separated by fifteen years, I found that the layers of meaning were determined by time as much as place. I was most powerfully moved by the transformation of Son My from a site of unmediated confrontation with the victims into an attractive park presided over with grace and detachment. Although I was not able to ask the obvious questions about when and under whose auspices the various elements of that transformation had been implemented, it seems likely that the emotional toll exacted by the kind of recitation I encountered in 1977 could not have been sustainable.

Just four months after the slaughter at Gettysburg, Abraham Lincoln disappointed his audience with brief and humble comments at the dedication of a battlefield cemetery. "The world will little note nor long remember what we say here,"
Tanks on display outside the War Crimes Museum in Ho Chi Minh City. In 1992 this museum did not seem well adapted to the “new” Ho Chi Minh City, with its international and capitalist veneer, and by 1994 it was rumored that the museum would soon be closed. The three museums visited in Vietnam were established for three very different purposes: for Son My, to provide evidence; for the Army Museum in Hanoi, to celebrate and glorify Vietnamese military accomplishments; and for the War Crimes Museum in Ho Chi Minh City, to show the evils of the enemy and warn against collaboration. Over time these emphases have become less pronounced, but it will probably take another generation to create exhibits that will question and explain what Vietnam has suffered and done in the war.

he said, “but it can never forget what they did here.” In reality, however, few people are able to confront the truth of “what they did here.” For the numberless battlefields and killing grounds of the twentieth century, “what they did here” becomes an abstraction, too often replicated to have unique meaning, while “what we say here” takes on palpable reality. The observer both confronts and creates a representation that by its very inability to capture the experience of death replaces it. At the same time, those who did experience it want others to know what they endured—and perhaps to believe in their heroism. Those whose families and communities were ripped apart by death also seek public meaning for their pain. In the end, commemorations are for the living, whether to educate, to give some peace by honoring the dead, or to celebrate. The separate treatment of Vietnamese heroism and enemy war crimes illustrates the political uses of war displays, but the incense burners and the garden at Son My may represent the lasting human need to do honor and seek comfort. U.S. newspapers reported that 1,000 people attended a ceremony in 1993 on the twenty-fifth anniversary of the murders.

In Vietnam there are no public memorials for those who died on the losing side; neither their tragedies nor their struggles are acknowledged, and no solace is offered to their survivors. Indeed, one of the first acts of the triumphant northern and National Liberation Front troops entering Saigon in 1975 was to destroy the Thieu regime’s monument to fallen soldiers of the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (the army of the Saigon government, ca.1955–75). With the passing of time and the displacement of those who participated directly, the purpose of war memorials and exhibits may change. It is my guess that another generation will attempt to create the exhibits that will question and explain what Vietnam has suffered and done in war. For now, that effort has begun with novels such as The Sorrow of War and Duong Thu Huong’s Novel Without a Name, and it is hinted at by officials who tell visitors that “there was no victory.” But museum exhibits, with their powerful images and their frequent official sponsorship, are not friendly to ghosts.

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by Kären Wigen*

David Howell stakes out three broad goals for this book, all within the domain of Japanese political-economic history. First, he aims to chronicle a case of “capitalism from within”: the emergence of full-fledged capitalist relations of production in the Hokkaido herring fishery, starting before the Meiji Restoration (1868) and unfolding thereafter independently of international trade. Second, he intends to ascertain the meaning of this development for the newly created proletariat, focusing on the immiserating impact of growing dependency and loss of status. Finally, he seeks to theorize the respective roles of political institutions and economic forces in the rise of this new mode of production. In a densely packed 184 pages of text, all three goals are accomplished with understated grace. The emergence of an indigenous Japanese capitalism is thoroughly documented, its implications for workers judiciously assessed, and the interplay of state structures and economic change thoughtfully specified.

Yet there is much more to this book than that. In the course of tracing the evolution of productive relations in the herring fishery, Howell also treats his reader to incisive analyses of relations between Ainu and Japanese, the interplay of agriculture and proto-industry, the clash between moral-economy discourse and market rationalization, and much more. By the end of the book Howell has illuminated a very broad canvas, offering insights on everything from environmental, geographical, and technological history to the study of nationalism, diplomacy, ideology, protest, ethnicity, status, and gender.

When Howell’s story opens in the eighteenth century, southern Hokkaido is in the hands of the Matsumae domain (feudal lord’s holdings), and the herring fishery is dominated by a handful of “contract merchants.” These men are agents operating on behalf of the major Matsumae retainers, who, in lieu of rice lands or stipends, have been given rights to all fish caught along specific stretches of the coast. The contract fishers thus represent merchant capital in its classic mode of dependency on the feudal regime; their wealth derives from their monopoly over Ainu workers (the original source of labor in the fishery) and from their monopsony (having only one buyer for a commodity) over herring hauled ashore in their respective territories. This includes fish caught by wajin (natives of Honshu), who during the course of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries increasingly migrate northward into the area.

As the wajin population grows, contract fishers discover a new source of profit: extending credit to the small, independent operators who come to make up the bulk of the southern Hokkaido population. These household fishers make their living by catching herring from their own boats, using their own gill nets, and then processing it on shore to sell as food or fertilizer. Most are heavily dependent on the domain’s contract merchants for advances of food, cash, and supplies. But as creditors to the wajin, the designated contract merchants are not alone. Rather, they must compete with a rising class of “supply merchants,” mainly shippers and brokers with close ties to fertilizer dealers in Osaka or Omi. It is these supply merchants who prove to be the progressive force in the fishery during the nineteenth century, eventually spearheading the move to capitalist production.

The crucial transition takes place between 1830 and 1860, against a backdrop of three important social and political changes. First, the famine of the Tenpo period of the 1830s sends thousands of desperate young men from northern Honshu to Hokkaido in search of work and food. The ready availability of unskilled labor in turn facilitates the adoption of new technology in the fishery: a much larger, more efficient net-and-trap combination that is permanently anchored to the shore. The new pound-traps allow a merchant with no previous fishing experience to own and operate a profitable fishery. As a result, creditors begin to foreclose on indebted fishers and take over their operations, hiring them back as wage laborers. In this way a new strata of proletarians appears—as does a group of fishery owners who are not beholden to the domain for mercantile privileges, and who are willing to take aggressive risks in their businesses.

1. Tohoku women migrate north in smaller numbers as well, many to become prostitutes in the booming Hokkaido port towns. While women appear occasionally as laborers in the fishery, the main way they figure in Howell’s story is through prostitution, which appears to have been ubiquitous in this cash-rich, male-dominated region.

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The transformation to capitalism is completed when state structures change to accommodate the new relations of production. Strikingly, the institutional transition begins before the Meiji Restoration, when the bakufu (the Tokugawa central government), for strategic reasons related to the opening of Hakodate to foreign trade, assumes direct control of the region in 1854. But the development of a full legal and institutional framework for capitalist production is a fitful process, extending across several decades of alternating reform and resistance. When Howell’s story concludes in 1932, the last remaining gill netters—now operating in Karafuto (southern Sakhalin)—have just succeeded in forming a corporation of their own, signaling the small fishers’ arrival as petty capitalists. Unfortunately, by the time they arrive, almost all the herring are gone.

The grim ecological trajectory of the fishery raises important questions in its own right. For those familiar with the laudatory literature on Tokugawa environmental practices in other areas (notably forestry, commons management, and river conservancy), it comes as something of a shock to see the state—beginning with the bakufu—not only allowing the destruction of this fishery, but effectively promoting it. Howell is undoubtedly right to attribute the herring’s demise primarily to the Meiji state and its race for economic growth at almost any cost (though he acknowledges the collusion of fishers, small and large, in the process). Still, one wonders why the regime was not more farsighted. Unlike rice cultivation and sericulture (the raising and keeping of silk worms for the production of raw silk), herring ecology appears not to have been the target of any significant state-sponsored research in the Meiji years, despite its enormous importance as a revenue source while it lasted. Did Tokyo fundamentally underestimate the ecological fragility of the fishery (and the managerial investment necessary to regulate it)? Or did the new state deliberately liquidate this stock of natural capital to underwrite agricultural settlement in its then tenuous frontier? This is one of many areas where Howell’s study raises more questions than it can be expected to answer. One hopes that his work will open the way for others to pursue such issues further.

In any case, important as it is to his story, ecological history is not the terrain on which Howell makes his major contributions. For most readers, the most engaging part of Capitalism From Within will probably lie in his argument that the development of capitalism in the Matsumae domain signals a latent potential in the Tokugawa economy as a whole. Matsumae may have been distinctive in many ways (not least in its high degree of dependence on trade), but it was not, he insists, fundamentally exceptional; while the forms of feudal institutions in this buffer domain may have been unusual, their essential functions were congruent with those of their counterparts elsewhere in the archipelago. As a result, the emergence of capitalism in Hokkaido suggests to Howell that similar pressures existed throughout the country—and might have led to similar results more often had other domains been less beholden to a rice-centered ideology.

It is in defending this controversial claim that Howell produces the most arresting conceptual material in the book. For instance, in investigating those features that made Matsumae distinctive—its trade with the Ainu, its disregard for agricultural surveys, and its lack of a landed peasantry—Howell offers a penetrating analysis of many taken-for-granted elements of the feudal landscape. Even more strikingly, in showing that Hokkaido was not the only periphery in the vanguard of economic change, he inverts our conventional geography of “advanced” and “backward” areas. “The impetus for economic growth,” he writes,

came from the proto-industrial hinterland, but the feudal institutional structure—located as it was both physically and ideologically in the agricultural core—could not adapt. . . . Incidents like the Sanhei rebellions, in which peasants [from the proto-industrial hinterland] reacted against tight domain (and hence merchant-capital) control over the economy, may have represented failed attempts to open the door to future capitalist development. (p. 179–80)

In this way Howell argues that the herring fishery compels our attention as a model for what might have happened elsewhere in Tokugawa Japan. Yet it is equally compelling as

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2. Nor is the relationship between fishery and forestry merely one of contrast; there were also intimate interconnections between the two. For instance, the Nambu domain’s progressive policies of forest enclosure in the eighteenth century steadily pushed peasants out of the Shimokita Peninsula, forcing many to migrate to Hokkaido and join the wajin labor force. And the heavy fuel needs of fish processing precipitated severe deforestation along the coasts of Hokkaido itself, denuding the uplands and flooding the lowlands wherever the herring were hauled ashore. One shudders to think of the havoc this must have played with the riparian-based Ainu ecosystem.

3. As Howell explains: “Under the kokudaka system [in other words, the use of assessed rice yields to organize economic and social institutions] a daimyo’s [hereditary feudal nobleman’s] place in the institutional hierarchy of the Tokugawa state was measured in terms of the putative agricultural productivity of his domain. Although it very quickly ceased to reflect actual economic conditions, the kokudaka system retained its institutional importance throughout the Tokugawa period. . . . When officials pressed peasants to produce as much rice as possible—even when climatic or technological conditions made rice cultivation impractical—they were responding to the position of rice as a measure not only of wealth but also of status in the feudal polity. The kokudaka system thus was an institutional hurdle to economic development” (p. 178).
an indicator of what did happen elsewhere. Readers may argue about whether Hokkaido's development represents a seldom realized potential in the feudal economy, but there is no disputing that it was an integral part of that economy—and one about which we have known surprisingly little until now. Through the apertures of the herring fishery Howell is able to show us a new side of Japan's economic map, exploring linkages not only along the coast of the Japan Sea but with Osaka-based marketing circuits as well. The sophistication of those circuits is brought home by the speed with which market signals traveled through them. During the food crises of the Tenmei (1781-89) and Tenpo periods, surging prices for rice drove prosperous farmers in the southwest to bid up the price of herring meal, even as poor harvests in the northeast drove many Tohoku peasants into the fishery in search of work. These and other revelations tell us a great deal about the sensitive connective tissues that bound Hokkaido tightly to Honshu's economic rhythms. * 

Little wonder, then, that Howell is wary of the term "frontier." In scholarship on early modern Hokkaido, he argues, this hoary geographical concept has led to a number of historical fallacies: an inclination to downplay the island's linkages not only along the coast of the Japan Sea but with Osaka-based marketing circuits as well. The sophistication of those circuits is brought home by the speed with which market signals traveled through them. During the food crises of the Tenmei (1781-89) and Tenpo periods, surging prices for rice drove prosperous farmers in the southwest to bid up the price of herring meal, even as poor harvests in the northeast drove many Tohoku peasants into the fishery in search of work. These and other revelations tell us a great deal about the sensitive connective tissues that bound Hokkaido tightly to Honshu's economic rhythms. * 

Little wonder, then, that Howell is wary of the term "frontier." In scholarship on early modern Hokkaido, he argues, this hoary geographical concept has led to a number of historical fallacies: an inclination to downplay the island's profound interconnections with Honshu, a tendency to ascribe the harshness of life in the region to its supposed isolation, and an unwarranted projection of Meiji-era geopolitics back to the medieval era. In all these respects, Howell is inarguably right. The frontier of popular imagination is demonstrably inadequate to represent the complex history of early modern Hokkaido. Yet one of the most important potential contributions of his study is the way in which it could force us to reconceptualize what a frontier is and how it actually operates.

Unfortunately the full potential of such comparative contributions may go unrealized, for this book does little to claim the attention of the wider audience it deserves. In part this is a matter of theoretical modesty. Nowhere does Howell explicitly challenge the established historians of modernity (including neo-Marxian dependency theorists like Wallerstein), who invariably locate capitalism's origins exclusively in western Europe. Nor does he offer the empirical context that non-Japan specialists might need to follow his argument in full. The implied reader of this book is familiar with the Chichibu Rebellion and the Boshin War, and does not need a gloss for such place names as Shonai or Nanbu. And in striking contrast to the thrust of the text, the frontispiece map depicts Hokkaido in isolation from Honshu; the intricate connections between the two islands—so carefully charted in words—cannot readily be envisioned unless the reader already has a well-developed mental map of Tokugawa Japan.

This reviewer, for one, hopes that such authorial decisions will not mean that Capitalism From Within is read by only a narrow circle of Japanese historians. Howell may be modest about the comparative significance of his findings, but this is a boldly conceived work with an important message for a major field of interdisciplinary inquiry. The careful, sustained exposition of Howell's arguments deserves a close reading from all scholars concerned with the origins of capitalism, not just those with a professional interest in the emergence of modern Japan.


by John W. Powell*

In this latest telling of the Japanese biological warfare (BW) story Sheldon Harris, emeritus professor of history at California State University at Northridge, has brought together the available evidence of Japan's criminal experiments in "public health in reverse," including additional details recently unearthed by Japanese and Chinese researchers.

This is the gruesome story of Japan's attempt to turn disease into a weapon of war. For more than a decade Japanese military scientists experimented with a wide range of pathogens in their search for the most efficient killers of men. Their laboratory animals were humans, mostly Chinese, but included some Russians and a few American and Commonwealth prisoners of war.

Some initial work was done in Japan, but only after the program was moved to China following Japan's military conquest of China's northeast (Manchuria) in 1931 did it become a massive effort. Under the direction of Ishii Shiro, an army surgeon who eventually attained the rank of lieutenant general, large walled and guarded compounds were built. Microbial cultures were mass-produced and ingenious "germ bombs" were manufactured. At the main installation, code named Unit 731, some 3,000 "human guinea pigs" were killed in laboratory and field tests.

In addition to Unit 731 there was another large installation devoted to research on plant and animal diseases. It was called Unit 100 and headed by an army veterinary officer, Wakamatsu.

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4. These revelations also suggest that environmental degradation has been an important theme in the demographic and economic history of a large area of Japan.
Yujiro. Not much has yet been learned about Unit 100's work except that it also used human guinea pigs to determine what effects various livestock diseases had on humans.

A number of BW attacks were made against Chinese civilians and military targets, and in some cases outbreaks of disease followed. It is impossible to say whether later outbreaks in these and adjacent areas were secondary epidemics or resulted from natural causes. The Chinese are uncertain, but even today they maintain special "health watches" in areas known or suspected to have been scenes of BW attacks.

That is the first part of this horror story. The second part began after the U.S. occupation of Japan when U.S. investigators uncovered the story but decided that Japan's biological warfare expertise would be an invaluable addition to the U.S. war arsenal. In order to secure exclusive possession, all information was classified "top secret," and instead of being charged as war criminals the Japanese participants were given blanket immunity and cajoled and bribed to reveal their secrets to U.S. BW scientists. The deception succeeded for more than three decades. Occasional leaks, mainly in Japan, were ignored or dismissed as "communist propaganda."

The cover up began to collapse in the late 1970s when a new generation of Japanese reporters aggressively pursued and interviewed several of the surviving Japanese BW warriors. The concurrent discovery in the United States under the Freedom of Information Act of previously secret U.S. documents revealed the whole sordid story of the original Japanese war crimes and the almost equally revolting American obstruction of justice.

Many articles, books, and TV programs have dealt with this subject during the past fifteen years. All have gone back to the same sources: the U.S. archives, the published summary of the 1949 Khabarovsk trial of twelve Japanese army BW personnel captured by Soviet troops in the closing days of World War II, material ferreted out by Japanese researchers, and discoveries in China where Japan's BW activities were centered. (There is, however, some evidence that Japan employed BW in other areas of the Pacific as well.) In recent years additional material has come from Japan, where reporters and academics continue to dig into the story. More information has also come from China, where researchers have begun excavating ruins of BW factories that the Japanese burned and dynamited on the eve of their surrender in 1945. All of this research adds to our knowledge of Japan's criminal BW project and its importance.

Further research, while not likely to alter the basic story, may reveal even more valuable information. How high was knowledge and complicity? Did the emperor know? And on the U.S. side, how high did knowledge of the cover up go? Did Truman sign off on the deal? However, I think it is time to move the main thrust of new research to the Korean War. North Korea and China charged the United States with using Japanese expertise (and perhaps the experts themselves) in waging BW during that conflict. It is a delicate subject in the United States completely as can be done with the information available.

One more: Harris's account of the emperor's supposed inspection visit to a water treatment facility Ishii developed seems unlikely. According to the story, Ishii urinated in a glass, poured it through the filter, and offered it to the emperor to drink. When the emperor declined, Ishii is said to have tossed it off himself. Considering the Japanese abject demeanor in the presence of the emperor, this story sounds improbable. It is difficult to imagine even the flamboyant Ishii engaging in such an act of lese majeste!

Despite these objections—perhaps just cavils—Sheldon H. Harris has produced a worthwhile addition to the Japanese BW literature. His book is the place to begin for an introduction to the subject. He tells the story matter-of-factly and about as completely as can be done with the information available.


by Robert Albon

Japan at War is a collection of interviews begun in 1988 of World War II survivors and their families and friends, almost equally divided between civilians and military personnel. The interviews of a half-dozen Japanese authors (Ienaga Saburo, Ota Masahide, Yokoyama Ryuichi, Miyagi Harumi, Yokoto Yutaka, and Hatanaka Shigeo) on the war are an invaluable resource not available elsewhere. Non-Japanese readers will not only find these authors' works mentioned in the notes that accompany their interviews, but can also examine their opinions and outlooks and estimate their importance for the readers' own research before going through the arduous process of locating and translating one of these authors' books. The remaining seventy-one interviews are a different matter.

Contrary to the claim boldly stated on the jacket of the hardcover edition and the back cover of the paperback edition, Japan at War is certainly not the first book to use oral history effectively to tell the story of the impact of World War II on the Japanese people. Although it is unique in the quantity and almost exclusive use of Japanese interviews, it is hardly ground-breaking. Indeed, in the pursuit of exclusiveness the Cooks interview only three Koreans and no other non-Japanese. The interviews mostly duplicate information available in previously published English-language sources, such as Edwin Hoyt's Japan's War and Studs Terkel's The Good War. Even interviews featuring Unit 731 and bacteriological weapons (chapter 6 in Japan at War) have been around for five years.

On p.17 of the introduction Theodore Cook claims that it is not the goal of this book to present a strategic overview of the war. His hope is to have the war "faced and examined in public" (p.20). There is a need to show the non-Japanese reader how this public examination is taking place today in Japan, but it is not clear how the Cooks hope to accomplish this goal. Nevertheless, the Cooks do succeed in presenting a Japanese perspective, reminiscent in some respects of Ienaga Saburo (see his interview on pp.441-47). Ienaga strongly believes in the need to inform all Japanese of the atrocities committed in the war, and the failure of the Japanese government to fully compensate Koreans conscripted during the war, and Japanese refusal to grant full citizenship to Japanese of Korean descent are serious human-rights issues today with roots in the war years. Yet, other than one sentence on p.391—"We cannot give anything to foreigners," (the Japanese official's reply to a Korean hibakusha seeking aid for her injuries)—the postwar mistreatment of Koreans is not directly mentioned in Japan at War. The authors also entirely ignore another important current issue: "comfort women," the women who were recruited, bought, or abducted to serve as sexual slaves to the Japanese military in every theater of the war.

The stories in Japan at War are interesting, readable, and even if they are not developed to their highest potential, they do give an accurate Japanese perspective on the war.

The war remains unresolved for Korea as well. There were three Korean informants interviewed in Japan at War: a prison guard (pp.113-20), a conscript laborer (pp.193-98), and a Korean hibakusha (survivor of the atomic bombing) (pp.387-90). Unequal treatment of Japanese and Korean hibakusha, the failure of the Japanese government to fully compensate Koreans conscripted during the war, and Japanese refusal to grant full citizenship to Japanese of Korean descent are serious human-rights issues today with roots in the war years. Yet, other than one sentence on p.391—"We cannot give anything to foreigners," (the Japanese official's reply to a Korean hibakusha seeking aid for her injuries)—the postwar mistreatment of Koreans is not directly mentioned in Japan at War. The authors also entirely ignore another important current issue: "comfort women," the women who were recruited, bought, or abducted to serve as sexual slaves to the Japanese military in every theater of the war.

*Robert Albon graduated from the University of Wisconsin in Asian studies this year and joined the U.S. Army. He lived in Japan for a year as an exchange student.


Although *Japan at War* conveniently compiles an oral history of World War II from Japan’s point of view for non-Japanese readers, similar accounts for the majority of the interviews are already available in English, and I hazard all are available in Japanese. Moreover, the table of contents is not convenient for quickly accessing information, nor is there an index. Nevertheless, with seventy-seven interviews, including several Japanese authors, assembled in one place, one can overlook such small impediments. *Japan at War* will probably find its niche as a pinch hitter for the reader who needs a quick citation or a few quotes to spice up a paper but does not have the time do in-depth research. In this aspect it may be invaluable to some readers.

It is unfortunate that the great potential in *Japan at War* to bring the current Japanese outlook on the war home to a non-Japanese readership is only partially developed. Some topics, such as special attack units (kamikaze) or wartime journalism, are superbly covered in *Japan at War*, but they are also superbly covered in Hoyt’s *Japan’s War*. Had the Cooks concentrated on the connections between events of the war and developments in the postwar era they would have had a truly ground-breaking piece that would have added substantially to scholarship on Asia.

Still, *Japan at War* is a possible candidate for outside reading for Japanese history classes, although the book is not of the stature of Hane Mikiso’s *Peasants, Rebels, and Outcasts*. The stories are interesting, readable, and even if they are not developed to their highest potential, they do give an accurate Japanese perspective on the war.

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by Robert Albon

This is an ambitious work tracing the relationship of the acquisition of technology to the military-industrial complex in Japan from the eighteenth century to the modern day. Samuels posits that Japanese success in indigenizing successive waves of technology stems neither from a conscious strategic effort nor occurs by coincidence, but rather is the direct result of a national “ideology” that emphasizes the need to improve Japan’s technology so that Japan can compete with the West. Today this ideology is still alive and has allowed Japanese industry to compete effectively with the United States and other developed countries.

Since the Meiji period (1868–1912) the Japanese have followed a “three-chord” strategy to overcome their technological handicap vis-à-vis the West: indigenization of foreign technology, diffusion of learning at home, and the nurturing of industries that will develop the new technologies the nation needs.

Samuels examines the application of this three-chord strategy in the late Tokugawa and early Meiji musket and cannon industry, the prewar shipbuilding and aircraft industries, and the postwar aircraft industry. There are also concise (a few pages each) case studies of the steel and computer industries. Samuels is careful to note that Japan is not the monolith often depicted in the media; han (fief) and Tokugawa jealously guarded their nascent technologies, during World War II intense infighting between the Imperial Army and Imperial Navy sabotaged the war effort, and the postwar era has seen bitter struggle between the Ministry of International Trade and technology-first ideology that has allowed Japanese industry to persevere.

The section on the postwar aircraft industry well illustrates the differences between the military-industrial complexes in Japan and the United States. Japan has approached technology and industry as national interests to be defended along with territory and political objectives, whereas the United States has sacrificed economic interests and technological superiority for political and security objectives. The Japanese Self Defense Forces protect the nation more by subsidizing research and development and diffusing spinoff technology than by force of arms. The author attributes current Japanese success at the expense of the United States to U.S. failure to diffuse technological advances at home and protect against their loss abroad.

The title is somewhat misleading. I associate the phrase “rich nation, strong army” more with prewar Japan, but the book is primarily concerned with technology and trade, and the postwar section is prominent. The implications of the title become clear after a thorough reading of the text, but if Samuels’s purpose is to encourage U.S. adoption of Japanese ideology in retooling our defense industry, a more appropriate title would be more effective in disseminating his product. However, it will be a shame if “*Rich Nation, Strong Army*” does not reach a wide readership, because the book has a great deal to offer anyone interested in history, business, politics, or trade relations.

The first third of the book defines the relationships between technology diffusion and military research and development and military procurement. Samuels then introduces the history of science and technology in Japan. The section on the imperial Japanese aircraft industry and the section on the introduction of the Tanegashima musket and early munitions are good, but Barbara Molony’s *Technology and Investment: The Prewar Japanese Chemical Industry* covers the prewar diffusion of technology much more lucidly and comprehensively, and the section on the development of the shipbuilding industry is little better than a paraphrasing of Fukasaku Yukiko’s *Technology and...*

by Sato Yoichiro*

For a resource-poor state like Japan, trade relations with other countries are as important as diplomatic alliances in terms of national security. Nixon’s surprise visit to Beijing created a temporary diplomatic turmoil for the Japanese decision makers. However, Prime Minister Tanaka’s later visit to Beijing went rather smoothly.

In contrast, the other Nixon shocks—the decisions to suspend gold convertibility of the dollar in 1971 and later to float the dollar—were not really “shocks” to the Japanese since the international monetary crisis had already begun in 1968. Japan accumulated an internationally unacceptable amount of foreign currency reserve under the fixed rate system of $1 = 360 yen, but kept refusing the U.S. demand that Japan revalue its currency. A reasonable revaluation could have saved the international monetary regime under fixed rates, but it never happened.

Angel describes a series of negotiations that took place during the currency crisis between the United States and Japan, between ministries within the Japanese government, and between the Japanese government and the private sector. The amount of foreign pressure upon Japan varied from time to time during this crisis period. Japan continued to use reactive diplomacy to try to soothe foreign criticism while making as few concessions as possible on the exchange rate.

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At $35, “Rich Nation, Strong Army” is a bargain compared to other works in the field, such as Nakayama Shigeru’s Science, Technology, and Society in Postwar Japan for $90. If you find the beginning dry, skip ahead to chapter 5 before you set the book down. This book is a worthy addition to the library of anyone interested in Japan.


Nevertheless, due to internal divisions the Japanese government failed to agree upon an internationally acceptable level of yen revaluation. The Ministry of Finance never felt Japan had enough foreign currency reserves, though the Ministry of International Trade and Industry and the private sector eventually started worrying about the consequences of not yielding on the exchange rates. Japan’s political leadership failed to quiet bureaucratic infighting. Thus Japan’s negotiator could not sit at the international negotiation table with a solid position. Japan’s failure to offer an acceptable exchange rate led to the abolition of the fixed rate system.

The rich details and theoretical significance of Explaining Economic Policy Failure are of great importance to scholars of Japanese politics. Angel’s skillful research design reminds readers of the importance of case studies.

While Japan could be considered a “reactive state” because it makes small concessions to international pressure, its inability to cope with drastic policy change also earns it the title of “immobilist.” Japan’s decision-making process during the currency crisis shows both aspects.

This book is based on interviews with many Japanese decision-makers, including those in the private sector. A large part of the research took place during the mid-1970s when the policy battles had not yet completely cooled down. Nevertheless, the extensiveness of Angel’s interviews and the cross-checking with the printed records provide rich details of the domestic infighting.
Furthermore, the book answers theoretical questions not by itself but in combination with other research. One weakness of case studies is that their findings cannot be generalized unless compared with other case studies. Nevertheless, when conflicting theories compete for supremacy (which is always), case studies can be used to test the theories. Also, detailed case studies provide rich sources of new hypotheses by identifying as many variables involved as possible. Angel's book has these two advantages while avoiding the weakness. Angel chose the international monetary case for its high generality vis-à-vis more specific sectoral issues. In the monetary case, the effects of the policy changes to each interested party were only vaguely, if at all, understood by those outside the bureaucracy. At the same time the issue was broad enough to affect almost everybody in Japan. This characteristic of the international monetary case differs from most previous case studies, which focus on specific sectors and concern fewer policy actors. The comparison of this study with The Textile Wrangle by I. M. Destler, Hukui Haruhiro, and Sato Hideo (or other case studies on specific industries) shows that the high generality of the monetary issue and bureaucratic (particularly the Ministry of Finance) monopoly of information prevented nonbureaucratic actors from forming a counterforce.

Although Angel's critique of the Japanese bureaucracy is bitter, his deep affection for Japan and his concern over its political future are evident. Angel views "externa' esure" as necessary for the Japanese government to function effectively, but he is concerned about the negative long-term consequence of heavy-handed U.S. diplomacy on the U.S.-Japan bilateral relation: the strengthening of Japanese nationalism.

Japan's internationally promised administrative reform is still facing strong bureaucratic resistance. In the current political turmoil, bureaucrats are regaining their strength vis-à-vis politicians, while the latter are busy playing coalition games. Expecting the bureaucrats to decide among themselves which agencies to close, or even take budget and personnel cuts, is nonsense. As foreign policies are getting more intertwined with domestic politics, as we saw in the Structural Impediment Initiative talks, Japan's lack of central coordination is a clear disadvantage to its diplomacy in today's fast-changing post–Cold War world.

In sum, the rich details and theoretical significance of the book are of great importance to scholars of Japanese politics. Angel's skillful research design reminds readers of the importance of case studies. Also, Angel's thesis has great relevance for U.S. policies for dealing with an immobile Japan. If the right answer for the U.S. policy makers lies between "heavy-handed pressure" and "do nothing and wait," a temporary solution might be soft-gaiatsu (external pressure) of the public relations sort, which induces domestic coalition-building against Japan's bureaucracy.


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**Coming to Terms** is available at bookstores and from Westview Press, 5500 Central Ave., Boulder, CO 80301, U.S.A.; tel. (toll-free) 1-800-456-1995. In the United States please add $4.00 for the first book and $.75 for each additional book for postage and handling.

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General

Edward Allworth, ed., Central Asia: 130 Years of Russian Domiance, A Historical Overview (Durham, NC: Duke University, 1995).


East Asia

Marilyn Chin, The Phoenix Gone, the Terrace Empty: Poems by Marilyn Chin (Minneapolis, MN: Milkweed Editions, 1995).


Liu Yichang, The Cockroach and Other Stories (Hong Kong: Renditions Paperbacks, 1995).


Northeast Asia


South Asia


Southeast Asia

Zohi de Ishtar, Daughters of the Pacific (North Melbourne, Australia: 1994).


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The 1977 picture on the back cover shows a memorial to the victims of the "My Lai" massacre in Son My, Vietnam. Built in 1976 in a denuded landscape to which survivors were just returning, this tribute to the dead projected a political message of heroic defiance rather than grief. Fifteen years later the statue was surrounded by greenery and had been supplemented by a mosaic and small statues depicting death. Like the strings of paper cranes hung on the Statue of the Children of the A-Bomb in the Hiroshima Peace Park, sticks of incense in small burners testified to the persistent need of the living to remember their own dead. See pp. 67–73 for Martha Winnacker's personal account of her 1977 and 1992 visits to memorials of the U.S. War in Vietnam. This article provides a moving counterpoint to the main focus of this issue of the Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars—how World War II should be commemorated and understood in the United States and Japan. This photo is by and courtesy of Martha Winnacker.