

Kissinger's approach that is most perplexing. "Greatness" in the annals of statesmanship is certainly related to identifying forces shaping history and adjusting policies accordingly. But is the struggle between the superpowers in fact the only, or primary, force shaping the history of our time? Might it be that American and Russian mutual obsessions will result ultimately in both countries being swept aside by more relentless historical forces? And if so, might not Henry Kissinger's counsel be misleading?

There is very little in *For the Record* that suggests sensitivity to or appreciation of the magnitude of social and economic change currently taking place in the Third World. Dismissing Third World radicals is one thing; ignoring most of mankind's movement to modernity is something else again. This movement may be the main stream of the next century's history. Similarly, Kissinger has little to say about global, environmental, and demographic phenomena that might also prove to be the crucial forces of our time. Food and water shortages, mass movements of people, altered climates, expanded deserts, and polluted oceans could easily become the subjects and objects of world politics in the next generation. Should this come to be, Americans and Russians, arsenals at the ready and gazes fixed upon each other, may be left to wonder what became of the world while they were not paying attention. For the record, Kissinger might have at least cautioned us about such possibilities. [WV]

THE PUGNACIOUS PRESIDENTS

by Thomas A. Bailey

(The Free Press; 478 pp.; \$17.95)

Jean Yarbrough

In *The Pugnacious Presidents* the historian Thomas A. Bailey combines traditional diplomatic history, political history, and psychobiography in an effort to explain anew the causes for America's wars. He concludes that "there was little or no demonstrable connection between the incumbent's party and his involvement in war, major or minor"; "The United States, regardless of the President's party, got involved in all of its major wars because a larger war already existed to suck in the Americans."

Had Bailey stuck to this theme, his argument would be unobjectionable, if somewhat simplistic. But the book Bailey has written has nothing to do with political parties and not much to say about outside circumstances. As its title suggests, *The Pugnacious Presidents* is about personalities. Bailey believes there is a connection between foreign affairs and presidential psychology, but the connection between the relations of nations and presidential personality is never made clear. Bailey fails to show how an analysis of each president's "pugnacity level" substantiates his conclusion that circumstances beyond U.S. control have drawn us into war. Indeed, his conclusion suggests the opposite: If it is circumstances beyond our control that have embroiled America in war, then an analysis of "presidential pugnacity" is irrelevant at best.

But Bailey's analysis is not merely irrelevant; it is contradictory and superficial. Had he argued that, once confronted with a threatening international situation, the "pugnacity level" of the president decisively affected American foreign policy, it might have made sense. Bailey's analysis demonstrates, though, that there is no connection between presidential personality and the conduct of foreign affairs. Andrew Jackson was "unquestionably the most pugnacious man ever to enter the White House," yet he avoided provoking a war with Mexico over Texas; Grover Cleveland receives "high marks" for his pugnacity, yet he conducted a notably conciliatory and largely uneventful foreign policy. "Men of peace" such as James Madison involved the country in war.

Bailey nowhere tells us what he means by presidential pugnacity; what standards he uses to determine whether a president is bellicose or peaceloving; and finally whether pugnacity in a president is ever justified or desirable. At best Bailey muddies the waters by talking about "aggressive defensiveness" and "defensive aggressiveness."

In Bailey's simplistic analysis, pugnacity is nearly always bad, pacifism nearly always good. One exception is his surprisingly mild criticism of "brinkmanship," "massive retaliation," and "liberation" during the Eisenhower years. More in keeping with Bailey's superficial Manichaeism is his assessment of Jimmy Carter. "With his soft Southern accent, his ever-smiling [sic] teeth, and his record as a dedicated follower of the gentle Jesus, he could be expected to be a man of the olive branch rather than a man of the sword." Bailey never considers the far more important question of whether Carter's conciliatory policies harmed the United States. Instead he criticizes Carter for retreating from his pacifism in his 1980 State of the Union message, a speech Bailey considers "probably the most bellicose State of the Union" address ever delivered.

Finally, the book is not even well written. Its pages are cluttered with tongue twisting alliterations ("black blemish of bondage"), offensive stereotypes ("feathered red men"), and embarrassing efforts at being cute ("the hand that dispensed the firewater indeed ruled the tomahawk"). In fact, the only cliché that seems to be missing is an appropriate one: "the pits." [WV]

A GATHERING OF PERSONALITIES

Books continue to affirm our faith that the affairs of men are not simply the affair of impersonal forces. Don Cook's *Ten Men and History* (Doubleday and Company; x+518 pp.; \$14.95) celebrates the work of three Britons, four Frenchmen, and three Germans who contributed to the building of postwar Europe. A. J. P. Taylor's occasional pieces are gathered in *Politicians, Socialism and Historians* (Stein and Day; 270 pp.; \$15.95). Individuals from all continents who have suffered for their beliefs are the subject of the forthcoming *Convictions* by Arthur Dobrin, Lyn Dobrin, and Thomas Liotti (Orbis Books; c. 128 pp.; \$5.95). John Kenneth Galbraith, in *A Life in Our Times: Memoirs* (Houghton Mifflin; 537 pp.; \$16.95), includes a generous array of politicians, economists, and others he has met in his public life. Wilfred Burchett's *At the Barricades: Forty Years on the Cutting Edge of History* (Times Books; x+341 pp.; \$15.00) contains, in its account of the Australian author's career as a foreign correspondent of decidedly leftist sympathies, sketches and appraisals of important political figures.