

the Council on Foreign Relations (1921). All shared a similar objective: to develop, in the face of America's isolationism, an informed, articulate audience for "enlightened" international policies, which meant, in the 1920s and '30s, collective security and the League of Nations. Their approach included network building, widely circulated publications, and a seemingly endless series of meetings, seminars, and luncheons.

The strategy worked. By the late 1930s a strong political foundation had been laid for the increasingly open internationalist policies pursued by Franklin Roosevelt.

The interwar success of these foreign policy organizations was matched by a string of postwar successes. In the late 1940s and throughout the '50s these organizations proved crucial in constructing the cold war consensus about America's global military and economic obligations. In the 1970s they focused efforts among policy-makers and much of the public upon recognizing and responding to the changing international environment, to shifts in power among U.S. allies and adversaries, to the rising significance of economics, environment, and energy, and to the emergence of a North-South axis in international relations.

Wallace Irwin's *America in the World* belongs to these recent efforts. Sponsored by the Foreign Policy Association (where Irwin served as editor from 1976 to 1980), the book's objective is educational; it attempts to draw for the general reader a quick map of America's foreign policy terrain.

Though at times frustratingly sketchy, the book manages to construct a solid beginner's framework for understanding the often "bewildering" global scene. Part I focuses on the United States. It looks first at the fundamentals of the international system of which this country is a part—in particular the general characteristics and goals of the national actors central to it. The section goes on to present an excellent outline of the historical record, beginning with the colonists, and ends with a more conventional, but still useful, view of the country's principal foreign policy institutions.

Parts II and III focus on the international environment, on the regional concerns of Europe, Northeast Asia, the Third World, and the Western Hemisphere, and on such substantive issues as war, peace, human rights, economics, ecology, and world order. Again, the view is conventional but useful.

Irwin's final chapter is his best. His framework fully in place, he sets out a series of insights about foreign policy practice that are not only short, simple, and wise, but

relevant to professional and amateur alike. About "getting the facts," for example, Irwin writes:

"We all tend to select (or let somebody else select for us) those facts that fit a familiar pattern and confirm our opinions and hunches. Especially in a field as full of ambiguity as foreign policy, it is important to leave room in our minds for surprising facts and ideas—those that upset our preconceptions and make us think in new ways about familiar problems, or open our minds to unfamiliar ones."

Still, despite the book's admittedly modest aims and many achievements, something is missing. The problem lies in the discussion of the foreign policy process. Moving in an orderly fashion from harried president, to unresponsive bureaucracy, to meddlesome Congress, to inconsistently active public, the discussion tends to treat the process as largely distinct from its domestic policy counterpart. This is a problem common to much of the work of America's nonpartisan foreign policy organizations. Perhaps ten, and certainly twenty or thirty, years ago, such a description would have sufficed. No longer.

The fact is that domestic politics no longer stops at the water's edge. Sitting at the international table, once reserved for a fairly predictable set of actors, is a host of new, and often uninvited, guests. They bring new concerns and interests as well as new ways of achieving their objectives. Today, for example, state governors battle missile deployments, mayors pursue export policies, congressional subcommittee chairmen cut deals with foreign governments, and voters

cast ballots on nuclear freezes.

In short, foreign policy calls for understanding and skills quite unlike those developed over the years by America's progressive foreign policy community. By failing to recognize this changing domestic dimension of the U.S. foreign policy process, the community risks irrelevance—however important its analysis of foreign policy's changing external dimension.

## THE GREAT FRONTIER: FREEDOM AND HIERARCHY

IN MODERN TIMES

by William H. McNeill

(Princeton University Press; 71 pp.; \$13.95)

*Kalman Goldstein*

This slim volume by a master of world history is a distillation of McNeill's research and writing on human civilization and a further contribution to his argument against a microcosmic, or parochial, focus. In two essays, originally the Charles Edmundson Lectures at Baylor University for 1982, the author criticizes American claims to uniqueness and the Turner thesis of frontier democracy. For McNeill, global frontiers are better characterized by social hierarchy and constraining contacts with the "mother" culture than by anarchic freedom or pioneer equality.

Historically, says McNeill, change has embodied challenge and response; and it is violence and displacement, epidemiological onslaught, cultural differentiations, and struggles for dominance that have shaped the frontier. Whether enforcing military sanctions against an encountered "enemy" or replacing a decimated population with a subject labor force (slave, serf, peon, or indentured), frontier societies have extended old hierarchies or created new ones. These lead to, or are complemented by, graded hierarchies based on material success or on the ability to link the new communities to their civilized base. Thus the Spanish *encomendero*, the French Canadian *seigneur*, and Virginia's sons of English squires quickly brought a "slender simulacrum of European polite society" to the wilderness. Even the mountain men were incipient entrepreneurs tied umbilically to the provincial gentry, who, in turn, were economically and psychologically the shadow of the European elite.

In trying in such a brief volume to illustrate his thesis with examples from several cultures and epochs, McNeill runs the risk not only of truncated presentations and jar-

### CONTRIBUTORS

*Gerald Freund* is Vice President of the MacArthur Foundation.

*Margery Fox* is a Professor in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Fairleigh Dickinson University, New Jersey.

*Norman Meller* is Professor Emeritus of Political Science at the University of Hawaii.

*Brian Thomas*, a freelance writer, is a frequent contributor to *Worldview*.

*Kalman Goldstein* is a Professor in the Department of History and Political Science at Fairleigh Dickinson University.

*Paul Zigman* is a Senior Research Assistant and Special Assistant to the Dean of Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government.

