

zation of government. Obviously, libertarian individualism is antithetical to communitarian aims, but libertarian opposition to the state may clear some ground for the creation of community. If the libertarians weaken the state, that might constitute a political contribution; if, as Newman suggests, they only reinforce the traditional American antipathy to community and public life, they do more harm than good.

As intense as the criticism of liberalism has been in scholarly quarters, the attack on Louis Hartz has been far more fierce. It is as if scholars had come to a quiet consensus that liberalism is an impoverished political philosophy and then announced that America was never really liberal in the first place.

Whereas Hartz had argued that the American founding ideal was liberal, almost completely derived from John Locke's *Second Treatise on Government*, the founding ideal is recently up for grabs. Intellectual historians J. G. A. Pocock and Garry Wills have contended that Locke was of only minor importance to Jefferson, Madison, and Hamilton. By their accounts, the founders read almost everyone but Locke: Harrington, Hume, Rousseau, and the moral philosophers of the Scottish Enlightenment.

John Diggins defends Hartz from the criticism of Pocock and Wills but then makes his own emendations to the Hartz thesis. The American founding ideal, according to Diggins, was indeed liberal, but that founding ideal, and most important political thought since, has had a hitherto little-noticed dimension: Calvinism. By Calvinism Diggins means a belief in original sin, resistance to tyranny, "calling" as the route to salvation, and the pessimistic notion that men and women have an insatiable desire for happiness.

The present danger to American politics, says Diggins, does not derive from liberalism but from a shrinking of its Calvinist dimension. Liberalism has indeed made Americans a selfish people, but it has also made them free. If we call ourselves something other than liberal, if we allow Pocock and Wills to convince us that we're better than we really are, we will not realize how much correction and redemption we need from Calvinism. Calvinism enables Americans to understand and to restrain the selfish heart: without Calvinism, liberalism will destroy itself.

Diggins does not present his argument straightforwardly. His evidence rests on dozens of detailed scholarly disputations over how to interpret the most important writers who concerned themselves with

American politics in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. He wants to understand Henry Adams, Abraham Lincoln, and Herman Melville as political thinkers who found the right balance between liberalism and Calvinism. Unfortunately, his dense and complex analysis will be of interest primarily to scholars working in the areas of American political thought and intellectual history.

Both Newman and Diggins see liberalism as the driving force in American politics, and both see pure liberalism as pure disaster. They take individualism to be liberalism's invidious core, but they also believe that America's politics and political thinking can be reformed without eradicating that core. Diggins advocates a Calvinist revival, while Newman proposes a new public philosophy and an invigoration of the citizenry. Neither book ventures very far outside of liberalism's boundaries. In short, neither work offers a challenge to the Hartz thesis that American political thought is almost wholly confined to the liberal room. So the question becomes: Is liberalism, even an enriched liberalism, adequate to American politics in the last decades of the twentieth century? *WV*.

#### **IRAQ: EASTERN FLANK OF THE ARAB WORLD**

by **Christine Moss Helms**  
(The Brookings Institution; 215 pp.; \$9.95 [paper])

#### **IRAQ AND IRAN: THE YEARS OF CRISIS**

by **Jasim M. Abdulghani**  
(The Johns Hopkins University Press; 270 pp.; \$28.50)

*Lisa Anderson*

Few would have believed five years ago that a war could break out that would consume the lives of hundreds of thousands of people, threaten the oil supplies of the West, and revive the use of chemical weapons, while the world stood by, helpless to extinguish it. This, of course, describes the Iraq-Iran war that broke out in September, 1980. It is an object lesson in the frailty of the world community's understandings and institutions.

If the war did nothing else, however, it did serve to attract the attention of the American public to Iraq. Iran, recently triumphant in its revolution and still possessed of the American hostages (they were

released four months after the start of the war), was well known—if perpetually mysterious—to most Americans. Iraq, by contrast, had had no diplomatic relations with the United States since the 1967 Arab-Israeli war; and, to those who thought of it at all, it seemed likely to be just another of those closed, probably drab, Third World Soviet satellites, implacably hostile to American interests. The restoration of U.S.-Iraqi diplomatic relations in December, 1984, served merely to underscore how little most Americans know about the modern history of the country and about the disputes that underlie its war with Iran. Both books under review serve admirably in filling these lacunae and should be essential reading for anyone who wants to understand the war, particularly the Iraqi side of the story.

Christine Moss Helms's volume is designed to inform the educated nonspecialist. While adequately annotated, it does not bristle with arcane references, and it provides a good introduction to contemporary Iraqi politics and foreign policy. As demonstrated in *The Cohesion of Saudi Arabia*, her previous work on twentieth-century Saudi history, Helms's strong suit is assessing the political implications of geography—a useful and too often neglected perspective. Iraqi foreign policy is shaped by a long-standing sense of geographical insecurity. The country is virtually landlocked. It is dependent for agriculture on the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, whose headwaters lie in Syria and Turkey, for oil on the mountainous Kurdish regions on the Iranian border, and for access to international waters on the disputed Shatt al-Arab waterway. Not without reason, Iraq's relations with its neighbors have often been testy.

Iraq's largely arbitrary borders—a legacy of the European dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire after World War I—are matched by the diversity of its population. For fifty years, governments in Iraq have been trying to fashion a nation from the various communities of Arabic, Persian, and Kurdish-speakers, Sunnis, Shi'is, and Christians, each with ties to peoples beyond the country's borders. The most recent efforts have been made by the Ba'ath party, which has ruled since 1968; and Helms's description of the party's activity in "building Arab nationalism in one country" makes for fascinating reading, particularly those parts based on interviews with many of the regime's major figures, including President Saddam Hussein. The sources of Iraq's aversion to the Iranian Revolution's religious fervor are perhaps best conveyed in the small but symbolic fact that the coun-

try's foreign minister, Tariq Aziz, is a Christian. Fervently secularist as well as nationalist, the Ba'athist leaders of Iraq are persuaded that an Iranian-style revolution would destroy their country's long-sought and still-tenuous national identity.

Many of the roots of the Iraq-Iran war can be found in the combination of Iraq's long-standing concern to ensure the security of its eastern border, including its control of the Shatt al-Arab, and the present government's fear of the upheavals that would attend the politicization of its majority Shi'i population, thought to be proportionally underrepresented in the ruling elite. The dispute's long and tortured diplomatic history begins, however, in Ottoman-Persian rivalries, and it is in tracing this political history that Abdulghani's work is most useful. *Iraq and Iran* outlines the shifts in power behind the shifts in borders. It is somewhat more academic in presentation than Helms's work: One chapter alone has 203 footnotes, and it includes in useful appendixes several of the numerous agreements that attempted to resolve the dispute during our own century. (It is worth noting that Helms's maps are much superior in clarity and comprehensiveness.)

Iran's apparent weakness in the aftermath of its revolution contrasts sharply with the relative strength of the two countries in the mid-1970s. In 1975, Iraq grudgingly acquiesced in Iran's demands for border revisions in the Shatt al-Arab in order to end Iranian (and American) support for Kurdish separatist movements in the northern oil-producing areas that were draining Iraq's military and financial resources. Military blackmail has rarely produced stable borders in the Middle East, or anywhere else for that matter. However, Iraq's competition with Egypt for preeminence in the Arab world in the postwar period also contributed to its government's willingness to risk military confrontation with Iran. With Egypt sidelined by its peace treaty with Israel in the late 1970s, Iraq's leaders saw an opportunity to win the region's leadership quickly by "protecting" the Arab countries of the Gulf and beyond from the revolutionary threat posed by Iran.

Obviously the Iraqi leaders miscalculated: The Iranians proved better organized and more enthusiastic about the revolution—or at least more loyal to the Shi'i Persian nationalism on which the revolution drew—than expected. The war did bring Iraq back into the Arab mainstream, however, and its reliance on financial aid from the conservative Gulf states contributed to a perceptible moderating of the rhetoric from

Baghdad. Soviet willingness to toy with supporting Iran in the early months of the war—an idea later abandoned as the Iranian regime cracked down on the Soviet-backed Communist Tudeh party—also accelerated earlier moves on the part of the Iraqi leadership away from the Soviet camp and toward genuine nonalignment.

Since both contestants have declared their unwillingness to lay down their arms before the demise of the other's regime, and since neither superpower is in a position to dictate a settlement, the Iraq-Iran war is unlikely to see an early conclusion. This should give us ample time to reflect upon both the limits of military power and the distortions caused by looking at Third World conflicts through the lens of superpower competition. As both these books persuasively argue, Iraq—like all countries—has specific historical, regional, and domestic imperatives which, much more than ideological inclination, determine its foreign policy. The war, in cutting across the dividing lines of superpower rivalries, provides an unusual opportunity to assess American interests in light of regional rather than global politics. Both authors suggest that, quite apart from its membership in the Arab world, Iraq's enormous oil reserves—among the highest in the world—and its substantial agricultural and industrial potential make it a country worthy of much more serious American attention than it has received over the last twenty-five years. The recent resumption of diplomatic relations may be a step in that direction. Certainly both books will serve as useful aids to the understanding that is necessary if those relations are to be fruitful.

#### **CAN MODERN WAR BE JUST?**

by James Turner Johnson

(Yale University Press; xi + 215 pp.; \$17.95)

#### **WAR AND JUSTICE**

by Robert L. Phillips

(University of Oklahoma Press; xv + 159 pp.; \$14.95)

*Terry Nardin*

Writings about the just war are, for the most part, either historical, theological, philosophical, or practical. Although the two books considered here fall pretty clearly into the category of the practical, James Turner Johnson betrays an interest in historical and theological questions and Robert L. Phillips makes some effort to provide a philosophical ground for the moral judg-

ments he derives from the just war tradition. Both, however, are concerned primarily with contemporary war and military policy and with the application of traditional morality to military conduct in the circumstances created by the spread of revolutionary war and the invention of nuclear weapons. Their aim is to provide practical advice on how contemporary war might be conducted justly.

Johnson's book has been assembled from a series of occasional pieces presented during the past few years to various audiences, and the resulting text is rather loosely organized and sometimes repetitious. But the central argument is clear enough. Focusing largely on questions of moral conduct in war, the author argues that the just war tradition prohibits any use of weapons that violate the central tests of proportionality and discrimination. Nuclear weapons, if designed and used in ways that did not cause disproportionate and indiscriminate destruction, would not themselves be morally objectionable. Given present technology, however, the emphasis should be on replacing nuclear with conventional weapons and on developing the strategies and organizations needed for conventional defense.

Johnson further argues that because the tradition unequivocally bars direct attacks on noncombatants, the counterforce strategy is the only morally permissible targeting strategy for nuclear weapons. This implies the moral unacceptability of massive retaliation, assured destruction, and similar strategic doctrines and indicates that the U.S. ought to begin placing greater emphasis on strategies of counterforce and flexible response as quickly as is practicable. Furthermore, we should welcome and seek to refine new weapons that are compatible with these strategies. Among them are the neutron bomb and the cruise missile, against which, Johnson suggests, there has been an irrational emotional reaction by an uncomprehending public.

Many will deplore Johnson's recommendations as simply abetting harebrained schemes for fighting limited nuclear wars and as tending to undermine the present system of stable mutual deterrence. But his conclusions are no more than a straightforward and unsurprising working out of the implications of traditional moral principles, such as the principle of noncombatant immunity, for nuclear weapons policy. Precisely how to translate into sensible policy the judgment that morality requires us to shift our military policy away from a reliance on weapons of mass destruction is a question that Johnson cannot and does not