

Cameron, as much as anybody, is responsible for the contemporary film fetish for butt-kicking women, like big Sigourney Weaver in "Aliens" and the beefed-up Linda Hamilton in T2. This is always hyped as feminist empowerment (à la "Charlie's Angels"), but it's driven far more by the adolescent male's wish that sexy girls would stop being interested in all that boring girl stuff and start being interested in cool boy stuff like fighting and guns.

Mostow tops Cameron's obsession when in T3 we get to watch a potential governor of California pile-drive a pretty girl headfirst through a ceramic urinal. Most women, however, aren't made out of instant-healing liquid metal. Do they really benefit from Hollywood telling males to forget the tradition that it's unmanly to hit a girl? ■

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BOOKS

[*The Illusion of Victory: America in World War I*, Thomas Fleming, Basic Books, 543 pages]

In Wilson's Wake

By Robert D. Novak

A GOVERNMENT propaganda machine spews out questionable allegations to justify America going to war without its national interest being at stake. The president invokes global considerations transcending selfish nationalism. Critics of the war, Left and Right, come under attack. An aggressive attorney general tramples on liberties with hardly a peep of protest from the news media.

Is this a leftist, libertarian, or even paleoconservative critique of George W. Bush's war policies? No, it is the account by Thomas Fleming, a prolific historian

and novelist, of how President Woodrow Wilson and the United States entered World War I, how America kept Germany from winning that war, and how Wilson was complicit in the mangled peace, with tragic consequences for the future.

Fleming is labeled a contrarian, thanks to his last two nonfiction books: *Duel*, defending Aaron Burr against Alexander Hamilton, and *The New Dealers' War*, deconstructing Franklin D. Roosevelt's leadership in World War II. In fact, Woodrow Wilson has become such a sitting target for willing historians that an assault on him can hardly be called revisionist. But *The Illusion of Victory* is much more than an anti-Wilson screed. It brilliantly portrays a process that casts a long shadow over the nation's history and evokes haunting comparisons with America in the 21st century. What Fleming portrays is one of the sorry chapters in the American experience. With Germany on the verge of victory in a bloody war of attrition, Wilson takes an unprepared and unenthusiastic nation into the conflict to save the day for Britain and, however incidentally, France. All dissent is ruthlessly suppressed, as American boys are poured into the meat grinder on the Western Front. Mixing arrogance and incompetence, Wilson goes to Paris for a peace conference that makes certain a resumption of world war within two decades. With a crippling stroke hidden from the public, he concludes his presidency in a dismal performance that guarantees his country will not join his beloved League of Nations.

Fleming's story begins with Wilson, who broke a tradition of more than a hundred years by delivering his messages personally to Congress rather than sending them in writing, traveling to Capitol Hill to demand a declaration of war. "He had only the dimmest idea of how the United States would fight the war," Fleming writes, adding that Wilson "thought the United States would not have to send a single soldier to France."

That speech followed an onslaught of British propaganda, fabricating German

war atrocities and demonizing Kaiser Wilhelm and the "Prussian autocracy." Nevertheless, the great orator Wilson evoked scant reaction when he uttered his famous proclamation that "the world must be made safe for democracy." The only person to react to those words was Sen. John Sharp Williams of Mississippi, who began clapping and managed to provoke a wave of applause.

No member of Congress was a more enthusiastic interventionist than Williams, who saw the war, Fleming writes, as "a chance to redeem the secessionist South in the eyes of the ruling North." Williams exemplified the coarseness of the political class in its contempt for antiwar dissenters. He accused antiwar Sen. Robert LaFollette, the fearless Wisconsin progressive Republican, of giving a speech that was "pro-German, pretty nearly pro-Goth and pro-Vandal" and "that would have better become Herr Bethmann-Hollweg [the German chancellor]." Williams led several colleagues in introducing a resolution that denounced LaFollette as a traitor.

But Williams would only go so far in supporting Wilson—stopping short on female suffrage. The president had not really taken to the idea of women voting but was talked into supporting women's suffrage to forestall the Republicans from getting credit for passage. When Wilson tried to sell it as a war issue, Williams responded, "When the President says we can't lick Ludendorff [and] scare Bulgaria ... because nigger women in Mississippi can't vote, I decline to agree with him." Southern Democratic votes killed the proposal.

Wilson was hardly advocating a diverse America and in fact invented the odious "hyphenated Americans" label for Irish-American, Italo-American, and, certainly, German-American critics of the war as less than good Americans. The sentiment was fully shared by Wilson's bitter Republican enemies, former President Theodore Roosevelt and Sen. Henry Cabot Lodge. It was not healthy to be an "enemy alien" in the America of 1918. In Collinsville, Ill., Robert Prager was lynched simply because he was a

German immigrant, even though he said he wanted to be a citizen and had tried to enlist in the Army.

The Illusion of Victory deftly cuts between Washington politics, high diplomacy, warfare on the Western Front, and the American home front. But Fleming is most gripping in detailing gross violation of civil liberties by a president who after his death became venerated by liberals. Wilson's attorney general when the war began, Thomas W. Gregory, would make John Ashcroft look like a civil libertarian. Gregory warned dissenters to expect no mercy "from an outraged people and an avenging government": but was outdone by his successor, the notorious A. Mitchell Palmer.

Under the new Espionage and Sedition Acts, Big Bill Haywood of the radical International Workers of the World (IWW) was sentenced to 20 years in prison. Eugene V. Debs, leader of the American Socialist Party, delivered an antiwar speech in Canton, Ohio, to an audience that included the U.S. attorney from northern Ohio, with a stenographer at his side taking down Debs's every word. Debs was arrested for sedition, convicted by a jury, and sentenced to 10 years in federal prison (running for president from his cell in 1920). Unconstitutional? The Supreme Court upheld the Espionage Act, with liberal Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes's opinion asserting that antiwar critics can constitute "a clear and present danger."

Not even U.S. senators were immune from the savagery. Fighting Bob LaFollette, uncompromising in his criticism of the war, ran into demands for his expulsion from the Senate by Columbia University president Nicholas Murray Butler (who fired antiwar professors and expelled antiwar students, including future movie writer and conservative columnist Morrie Ryskind). LaFollette was condemned by a 421 to 2 vote by the University of Wisconsin faculty for "disloyal utterances." Senatorial courtesy was forgotten, as future Majority Leader Joe Robinson of Arkansas told LaFollette to apply to the Kaiser for a seat in the Reichstag.

Such conduct derived from the war fever built by propaganda directed from London, as it became apparent that Britain and France could not win the war by themselves. Apocryphal German atrocity stories were verified by a special commission headed by the prestigious Viscount James Bryce. "In spite of its patent lies," Fleming writes, "the

IF THE U.S. HAD NOT **SUPPORTED THE ALLIES**, FLEMING SPECULATES, THE MILITARY STALEMATE COULD HAVE RESULTED IN A **NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT IN 1915**.

Bryce Report was a huge propaganda victory for the British. Convincing millions of Americans ... that the Germans were beasts in human form."

Wilson entered the war totally unprepared. The first act by the War Department in April 1917 after the declaration of war was to buy up 12,000 typewriters. The American Expeditionary Force (AEF) was untrained and poorly equipped, and the U.S. had to rely on the French for hand-me-down tanks and aircraft. Wilson was most determined that under no conditions would he permit his bitter enemy, Colonel Roosevelt, to lead a division of volunteers to France. But TR was able to send all of his sons into combat, including his youngest, 20-year-old Quentin, who joined the fledgling U.S. Army Air Service as a pilot.

Quentin Roosevelt's love affair with Flora Payne Whitney, the beautiful heiress of the Whitney and Vanderbilt fortunes, is touchingly rendered by Fleming. Harry Payne Whitney considered TR a dangerous revolutionary, and the former president regarded Whitney among the worst of the idle very rich. Nevertheless, the two young lovers were engaged, awaiting young Roosevelt's return from France. The odds that he would ever return were limited by very poor eyesight and the fact he was flying an obsolescent Nieuport borrowed from the French in combat against state-of-the-art German Fokkers.

Outnumbered by vastly superior enemy aircraft in a dogfight on July 14,

1918, Quentin took two machine gun bullets in the brain. His father's bitterness toward Wilson became personal, as explained by Fleming: "Woodrow Wilson's administration had refused to prepare for war and after war was declared, the president's appointees had failed to produce a single aircraft, in spite of spending a billion dollars."

U.S. doughboys saved Britain and France, but at a cost: 50,300 killed in action, 108,059 wounded in action, 120,139 total American dead from all causes. No American war has been so bloody over such a short span of time because, says Fleming, of the "lethal firepower of the German army and the AEF's primitive tactics." Fleming does justice to Wilson's egregious conduct at the Paris peace conference and his even more inept performance to win Senate ratification of the Versailles Treaty. The book ploughs new ground in detailing the plot by the president's wife and doctor to conceal nearly total disability following his stroke. Edith Galt Wilson actually envisioned a third term for her invalid husband and arranged an interview with him by veteran *New York World* reporter Louis Seibold for that purpose. "In obedience to Edith Wilson's orders," Fleming writes, "Seibold lied shamelessly." Seibold won the Pulitzer Prize, but Wilson was repudiated by voters in the Republican landslide of 1920.

The Illusion of Victory joins Patrick J. Buchanan's *Republic, Not An Empire* in suggesting the world would have been a much a better place had the U.S. not intervened in World War I. If the U.S. had not supported the Allies, Fleming speculates, the military stalemate could have resulted in a negotiated settlement in 1915. That would have meant no Soviet Union, no Nazi Germany, no Nazi or Soviet holocausts. Fleming marvels at the posthumous rehabilitation of Woodrow

Wilson during World War II (spurred by the lavish Darryl Zanuck film, "Wilson.") He is incredulous in reporting the 1962 survey of academic historians conducted by Arthur Schlesinger Sr. that ranked Wilson as the fourth greatest president in American history.

Fleming may not, however, fully appreciate Woodrow Wilson's role in American history. Henry Kissinger asserts in his monumental treatise, *Diplomacy*, that Woodrow Wilson's utopianism has prevailed, while Theodore Roosevelt's invocation of geopolitical reality is dead. Embracing Wilsonian doctrine, the United States no longer need cite national self-interest to go to war.

Fleming concludes by relating a visit to a memorial for Quentin Roosevelt at a little village in Champagne near the site where his plane crashed long ago. He expressed the hope that "the men and the women who guide America's covenant with power in the world of the 21st Century have the courage and the wisdom to manage our country's often perplexing blend of idealism and realism." Regrettably, these leaders all too often seem to be copying the terrible and foolish decisions chronicled here. ■

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[*Gulag: A History*, Anne Applebaum, Doubleday, 677 pages]

The Forgotten Terror Camps

By Richard Cummings

IN THE AFTERMATH of 9/11, the post-modernist Frederick Jamison famously observed in the *London Review of Books* that what was ostensibly a monstrous act of terrorism was, in fact, the direct result of America's policy of stamping out Communist parties throughout the

world. Presumably, he meant that Communism was the only valid means of eradicating social and economic injustices and that in the anti-Communist void created by the collapse of the Soviet Union and its satellites, opponents of American capitalist hegemony were left only with pre-modernist religious fanaticism as the basis for their *modus operandi*. Indeed, a careful reading of the Hamas Web site would appear to bear him out.

But while contemporary anti-modernism finds its violent expression in militant Islam, European and American intellectuals cling with religious fervor to their worship of the State, adhering to a faith in Communism and Marxist-Leninist class struggle that borders on the fanatical, in a way that is strikingly similar to an irrational faith in *jihad*.

Robert Conquest, who has effusively endorsed Anne Applebaum's *Gulag: A History*, comments in his *Reflections on a Ravaged Century* on "the persistence to this day of an adolescent revolutionary romanticism, as one of the unfortunate afflictions to which the human mind was and is prone." That persistence is best illustrated in the work of two of its most popular proponents, Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, in their widely praised (in academic circles) *Empire*, in which they concluded, in opposition to globalism,

This is a revolution that no power will control—because biopower and communism, cooperation and revolution remain together, in love, simplicity and also innocence. This is the irrepressible lightness and joy of being communist.

Negri is identified on the book's jacket as "an independent researcher and writer and an inmate at Rehibbia Prison, Rome," as though he were somehow a kindred spirit of Gramsci. In actuality, Negri is serving a prison sentence for the kidnapping of the scion of one of Italy's wealthiest families that led to the victim's death by suffocation—testimony not only to the myth of Communism but to its inevitable progression that culmi-

nated in its most oppressive and lethal manifestation, the Soviet *gulag*.

Applebaum, who witnessed the collapse of Communism in Eastern Europe as the Warsaw correspondent for the *Economist*, observes that Martin Amis "felt moved enough by the subject of Stalin and Stalinism to dedicate an entire book to the subject" but notes that few other writers of "the political and literary Left had broached the subject." She cites the case of a British literary editor's rejection of an article because it was "too anti-Soviet." It is a small omission, but Applebaum might have explained that Martin Amis's *Koba the Dread* started out as a book about his father, Kingsley Amis, who had been a Communist before his conversion to anti-Communism and his collaboration with Robert Conquest, whose *Great Terror* remains a classic work.

With Solzhenitsyn's *Gulag Archipelago* now almost a relic—the credibility of which was undermined not only by Natalya Reshstovskaya's revelations, but also by Solzhenitsyn's own subtitle, "An Experiment in Literary Investigation," which suggested that he did not regard the work as historical or scientific research—Anne Applebaum's *Gulag: A History*, stands alone as the definitive account of the network of prison camps created first by Lenin and then exponentially expanded and worsened in brutality by Stalin.

What Applebaum, now an editorial-board member of the *Washington Post*, has done in *Gulag* is to describe, in painstaking detail, what the camps were like, the suffering and death of those condemned to them, and the inhuman brutality of those who administered them, as well as the role of the Cheka and its successors, including the NKVD and the KGB. In this capacity, she is a meticulous historian of the model aspired to by von Ranke. History for her is describing what actually happened, free from the relativism of Gadamer. She is, in the most powerful and scientific way, post-theory and leaves to the reader to infer the "truth" from the indisputable facts of a monstrosity so great