

an outstanding Southern man of letters, to Hitler. "Bradford and Hitler agree with the Lincoln of the House Divided speech, that America, on the eve of the Civil War, stood at a divide between 'a great new social order based on slavery and inequality' [a remark allegedly made by Hitler] and one based on the principles of the Declaration. They only disagree with Lincoln as to which choice ought to have been made" (p. 503, n. 10).

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Because Bradford dared question egalitarian dogma, Jaffa accuses him of support for a social order based on slavery. (In this context, it is but a minor issue, though worth noting, that the veracity of the volume by Hermann Rauschning on which our author relies for his quotation from Hitler is much in doubt. Of the controversy surrounding Rauschning he seems blissfully unaware.) Of course Bradford did not view the Confederacy as an incipient Third Reich. It is not Bradford but his critic who subordinates morality to power.

Even his harshest critic must grant Mr. Jaffa that he has carefully studied Lincoln's words, which to him constitute a veritable Holy Writ. When he strays outside St. Abraham's purview, though, he sometimes slips. He informs us that Shakespeare's *King John* is set in the thirteenth century—the age "of papal supremacy within the Holy Roman Empire, of which Great Britain was a part" (pp. 14–15). Perhaps Mr. Jaffa would be good enough to give us the dates in which Britain was part of the Empire. Also in error is Jaffa's claim that Henry VIII wanted the pope to grant him a divorce from Catherine of Aragon (p. 19). Henry sought an annulment. The Holy Alliance did not defeat Napoleon; it was not formed until after Napoleon's final ouster (p. 84). ♦

## THE TRULY GREAT GENERATION

*Storm on the Horizon:  
The Challenge to American  
Intervention, 1939–1941*

JUSTUS D. DOENECKE  
ROWMAN AND LITTLEFIELD, 2000  
XIX + 551 PGS.

Justus Doenecke's careful study of the opponents of American entry into World War II makes evident that the noninterventionists had a

clearer grasp of essential truths about American foreign policy than their eager-for-war opponents. As our author shows, positions within the group varied widely; but on certain key points, a consensus emerged. Most basically, they maintained that the dominant aim of American foreign

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policy should be the protection of the United States. Only in case of a direct military threat is war justified; otherwise, a belligerent policy should be avoided.

Because of the vicious nature of the Nazi regime, almost all Americans viewed German military success in the early stages of the war with misgiving. The noninterventionists fully shared this aversion to the Third Reich and its *Führer*. Oswald Garrison Villard, an opponent of intervention long associated with *The Nation*, bitterly protested Nazi persecution of the Jews. He stated: "The Jews are treated literally as no German would be allowed under the law to treat a dumb animal" (p. 13).

Nor was Villard alone among non-interventionists with these sentiments. "Not since Genghis Khan and Attila, suspected Hugh Johnson in January, 1940, had there been such barbarism. Herbert Hoover . . . called for the creation of a new refugee state in Central Africa" (pp. 13–14).

But it does not follow from the undoubted evil of the German regime that it posed a military threat to the United States. Unless it did, the opponents of war maintained, war should be avoided. To this contention, supporters of intervention replied in two ways. First, they challenged the premise of the argument. Even if the Nazis posed no direct and immediate threat to the United States, were there not grounds to work actively for the elimination of their regime? Second, conceding their opponents' premise that only danger to the United States justifies a policy of belligerence, some interventionists claimed that Germany did indeed directly threaten our country.

To the first contention, the noninterventionists had a ready if controversial response. The premise "the existence of a sufficiently horrendous regime is by itself grounds for intervention" proves too much. The Nazi regime was not the only morally awful government in the world. What about Soviet Russia? "The *Chicago Tribune* found him [Stalin] possessing an 'unparalleled record of brutality and treachery'; he was 'the man responsible for more human misery than an since the Mongolian invasions.' . . . By 1941, [Senator Hiram Johnson] was saying of the Russian dictator, 'The

greatest blood-letting that ever was committed on this earth occurred through him'" (p. 214).

But what about the victims of Nazi persecution? Here the defenders of peace had a point of the utmost relevance. How would an intensification of the war in any way help the victims? Would not the best way to abate persecution be to help negotiate a speedy end to the war? One of the most militant noninterventionists, Lawrence Dennis, maintained that "[w]ere America truly humanitarian . . . it would persuade the Allies to 'stop the war'" (p. 56).

Those anxious for war pressed another argument. The power of the Nazis posed a direct threat to the United States. To counter them involved, not soppy humanitarianism, but hardheaded realism. Should we wait until Germany fully dominated Europe before acting against her? Why allow one's enemy to build itself into a power of invincible might?

The anti-interventionists answered here with a point of great depth. The fears of German invincibility stemmed from her success in the first two years of the war. After the German invasion of Russia, June 22, 1941, most military experts predicted swift Soviet collapse. Would not a victorious Reich then dominate Europe?

Here the noninterventionists' distaste for war led them to challenge an assumption of the argument just presented. Is it the case that the possession of large territories gained through conquest strengthens a nation? This is

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by no means certain. "To some Roosevelt foes, massive German conquests of the Soviet heartland really aided the United States and Britain, not threatened them. Late in June [1941], [Robert A.] Taft found the invasion postponing for many months any attack Hitler could possibly make on the U.S. . . . Even a victorious Hitler, such anti-interventionists kept saying, would not have it easy. Representative [Robert] Chipfield stressed that the German leader needed to rest his troops, replace lost planes, and police a vast area before turning his attention again to England and Western Europe" (pp. 221-22).

Besides, why assume that Hitler had hostile intentions toward the United States? No doubt he wished Germany to be the dominant power in Europe, but what followed from this as regards America? Interventionists such as Walter Lippmann conjured up a Nazi threat to invade the United States through Latin America, but they failed to back their expressions of panic with evidence.

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But suppose the interventionists were correct; what if Hitler had designs on the United States? Would the proper course of action then be to send as much aid as possible to Britain and Russia, as groups such as the Committee to Defend America by Aiding the Allies urged? Once more the opponents of war located a dubious premise. If the United States was at risk, would it not make more sense to build up our defenses rather than ship arms and supplies to other nations?

Here the noninterventionists echoed a theme prominent in the military during the initial months of 1940. "Chief of Staff George C. Marshall in particular objected to expending American matériel in what appeared a hopeless cause. He vetoed the sale of any fighter plane requested by Churchill, disapproved of any ship transfer, and agreed only to send rifles, machine guns, and field pieces left over from World War I" (p. 105).

Professor Doenecke has written a very self-effacing book. He confines himself to a detailed narrative of the arguments advanced by the major

noninterventionists, with little in the way of comment of his own. He clearly brings out their powerful case; unfortunately they did not prevail against Roosevelt's machinations. Doenecke has devoted a lifetime of scholarly study to his topic, and all future work on the noninterventionists must take account of this book.

I noted a few mistakes: The Soviet Union invaded eastern Poland on September 17, 1939, not September 27 (p. 13). Doenecke has the wrong Sir Arthur Salter; the man he refers to was an economist and official of the League of Nations, not the British jurist of the same name (p. 31). Sir Nevile Henderson's first name is misspelled (p. 199), as is Gandhi's *satyagraha* campaign (p. 206). It was not Marx who called anti-Semitism "the socialism of fools" (p. 56). ♦

## KNOCKOUT PUNCH

*Hustler: The Clinton Legacy*

JOE SOBRAN  
GRIFFIN COMMUNICATIONS, 2000  
XX + 263 PGS.

Ann Coulter is entirely right. She says in her foreword to Joe Sobran's devastating assessment of Bill Clinton that "[e]very once in a while, I think I'm a reasonably competent writer. And then I read a Sobran column" (p. xi). Mr. Sobran has the