

nuclear armaments of the United States retains a shape that the Eisenhower of 1960 would recognize: three major classes of strategic weapons based on aircraft, land-based missiles, and submarines, and a large variety of less-than-strategic weapons with shorter ranges and uncertain missions.

Students of the Cuban missile crisis will also find Bundy's chapter on this episode, which is also the longest in the book, revealing and insightful. Bundy concludes that "[t]he risk of nuclear war in the thirteen days was real, and the most important single consequence of the missile crisis may be that neither side wants to run such risk again." He goes on to suggest however that "the risk was small, given the prudence and the unchallenged final control of the two leaders."

Recent revelations by Soviet and Cuban officials at a Harvard-sponsored conference in Moscow that the Soviet Union had actually placed nuclear warheads in Cuba and that Fidel Castro was urging that the missiles be fired in the event of a US invasion of the island (which seemed imminent, from his point of view) would suggest that the risks were greater than Bundy believes. Nevertheless, Bundy has provided us with a highly probing and informative first-hand account into President Kennedy's thinking and the thoughts of those who sat around the table of the Executive Committee of the National Security Council during those fateful days in October 1963.

In the final chapter of the book Bundy provides us with his own views of the lessons and hopes of the nuclear age. He argues that survival in the nuclear age will require "candour and caution and imagination and effort." But the harsh reality is that nuclear weapons cannot be wished away and "[r]eduction of the risk, decade by decade, is our best hope for long-run survival." Let us hope that McGeorge Bundy's sound advice will not be lost on those responsible for current and future arms control. — *Fen Osler Hampson*

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Rites of Spring: The Great War and the Birth of the Modern Age

Modris Eksteins

Lester and Orpen Dennys: Toronto, 1989, 396 pp., \$26.95 cloth

■ We are now well into the season of fiftieth and seventy-fifth war anniversaries. Each week for the next five years will contain at least one public reminder of a battle or a heroic death or a mass slaughter. What we won't get much of is historical and cultural perspective: why was the Great War a unique event; how did the West deliver itself twice inside twenty years into a holocaust; what was in the cultural baggage the soldiers carried off to war with them; and why are we — citizens of the last decade of the twentieth century — shaped by these events and by the attitudes, and assumptions of those who participated in them.

Eksteins is a professor of history at the University of Toronto; however, I suspect there are lots of historians who will object to his method here. The author is writing cultural history and he has a thesis: that the sensibilities of both *modernism* and the *avant-garde* spring from the same roots as fascism and Nazism. Furthermore, Eksteins believes that the calamitous period from 1914 to 1945 is not only the story of war in a narrow sense of violent conflict organized for political ends, but also the working through of a cultural upheaval which was driven forward mostly by the new, and in 1914, uniquely dynamic German nation. While all of Europe was suffering the physical and cultural dislocation of industrialization, it was Germany, Eksteins asserts, that experienced the profound social and psychological effects most intensely — "The German experience lies at the heart of the 'modern experience.'"

It is not just Eksteins' thesis, but also the way he goes about his work that is audacious and refreshing. He sets up the book as a three-act play with an incongruous succession of calamities, cultural gurus and audiences that meet in and around and through the Great War: Serge Diaghilev almost, but not quite, meets Thomas Mann in turn-of-the-century Venice; there is an immensely influential and

intentionally scandalous debut performance of the ballet, *Le Sacre du printemps*, in Paris the year before war breaks out; deliriously happy crowds all over Europe take to the streets during the unusually balmy summer of 1914 to celebrate the coming of war; and even in the German General Staff's plan for victory in Europe, the Schlieffen plan, Eksteins finds the German "modernist" preoccupation with fantasy, rebellion and the big event — "a grand scheme, a Wagnerian script, that elevated limited tactical adventure to a total vision."

As the Great War grinds on through 1917, the grisly realities of a war of attrition serve to affirm the modernist preoccupation with myth and violence and death. When it finally ends, Germany has lost but the ethos has seized all of Europe. The spectacle of Lindbergh's flight from the new world to the old provides a popular hero for a continent disillusioned and exhausted by its present, and alienated from its past.

The book ends in Hitler's bunker in Berlin: while he plans his suicide his faithful officers dance in the cafeteria. From the experience of the Great War the Nazis had coaxed some meaning — however perverse and corrupt — where none could be found before. "The Great War was the psychological turning point ... for modernism as a whole. The urge to create and the urge to destroy had changed places." For Eksteins, fascism and Nazism were the embodiment of mass alienation brought about by the First World War, "Nazism was not just a political movement, it was a cultural eruption."

Eksteins' construction is not fully satisfying in that it stops too early. After accounting for the birth of the modernist sensibility, Eksteins touches only fleetingly on what he refers to as our present "post-modernist age." We are left to ourselves to make sense of this double-edged "modernism" amidst the chaos of our own time; where the political order of Europe, frozen for forty years after Berlin's fall, is shifting too rapidly for the alleged experts to explain or even understand. — *Michael Bryans*

Mr. Bryans is editor of Peace & Security.

BRIEFLY NOTED

The US-Canada Security Relationship

David G. Haglund and
Joel J. Sokolsky, editors

Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1989, 306 pp., US \$28.00 paper

■ Sub-titled "The Politics, Strategy, and Technology of Defence," this compendium contains a dozen essays on issues central to the US-Canada relationship in the military and security arenas. The chapters originated as papers for a June 1988 Queen's University conference marking the fiftieth anniversary of President Roosevelt's 1938 speech at Queen's in which he explicitly recognized the US interest in the security and defence of Canada. Among contributors to the volume are: John Anderson, a former Assistant Deputy Minister of Defence, on the modernization of North American air defence; Lt. Col. Douglas Bland, on the military consequences of neutrality; and Joel Sokolsky of the Royal Military College, on the strategy and politics of the original decision (since reversed) to purchase nuclear-powered submarines.

Human Rights in Canadian Foreign Policy

Robert O. Matthews and
Cranford Pratt, editors

Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1988, 375 pp., \$37.95 cloth, \$15.95 paper

■ This edited volume contains chapters by some fifteen authors with varying kinds of expertise in the field of human rights. The book examines Canada's human rights behaviour in five different international forums, in bilateral diplomacy, in two policy areas and in three bilateral relationships. The editors conclude that while Canada has shown a genuine interest in promoting human rights throughout the world, "this interest has not been without limits."

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Reviews of French language publications can be found in the *Paix et Sécurité* "Livres" section.