

that some persist in deeming trivial still provokes passion and outrage in loyal Americans everywhere.

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At the Water's Edge: American Politics and the Vietnam War by Melvin Small. Chicago, IL, Ivan R. Dee Publishers, 2005. 256 pp. \$26.00.

Melvin Small sets out to explore the rather unremarkable point that domestic politics affect foreign policies, and contends that this has not been adequately examined in the Vietnam era. Studies of Lyndon Johnson's political agenda, especially the impact of Vietnam on the Great Society, and of the media and the antiwar media abound, however, so Small's book is simply another—and not unique—addition to a topic that has been well covered. And his finding that the various presidents in the Vietnam era—John Kennedy, Johnson, and Richard Nixon—made decisions with domestic politics in mind is nothing new either. This book, then, is simply another pedestrian effort to tell an already well-known story.

American presidents in the 1960s and 1970s, like their predecessors during previous U.S. wars, developed their approaches to conflicts abroad with an eye toward politics at home. Small spends very little time on the Kennedy years, and thus neglects the intense politicization of Vietnam by a young President whose credibility had been diminished by the disastrous invasion of Cuba and who needed “clean-cut success,” in the words of his advisor, Walt Rostow, in Vietnam to overcome the Bay of Pigs debacle as well as other global setbacks.

For the Johnson years, which comprise the bulk of the book, Small reiterates what we already know. LBJ played politics with the 1964 election, both running as a peacemaker, as with the famous “Daisy” ad, and conniving to use the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution to preempt Barry Goldwater's attacks from the right. He tried to mollify the liberals by creating the Great Society, but infuriated “the Left” by under-funding it and then shifting his emphasis to Vietnam. The President hoped to reach out to “doves” by pursuing a liberal agenda, but recognized the power of the anti-communist “hawks,” and thus became a “dawk,” an ungainly term that was not really used at the time but which Small invokes with relish. As we know, this all came to a head in 1968, when liberals bailed out on LBJ and rallied behind, first, Senator Eugene McCarthy, and then Senator Robert Kennedy (whom Small blames for LBJ's intransigence in one of the stranger twists of logic in this book). This is yesterday's news, and Small tends to undermine his own arguments at that. On one hand, he expresses his sympathies for LBJ's political dilemmas and tends to be especially critical of the antiwar left, but he also contends that the political threat from “liberals, radicals, and hippies,” as well as dissatisfied African Americans (as demonstrated by urban uprisings in Watts and elsewhere) was “relatively minor.”

Small's work on the Nixon years is better, principally because it is less known, but, again, he is offering a traditional narrative, in which the President develops his policies for Vietnam with one eye on Vietnam, the Soviet Union, and China, and the other on the 1972 election.

But it is his treatment of the antiwar movement, a subject on which he has written extensively, that is most troubling. Small simply buys into the idea that "evocative images of mostly young, long-haired American antiwarriors" (p. 95) actually hurt the cause of ending the war. Time and again he regurgitates conservative attacks on those opposed to the war. In 1969, he suggests, they were as responsible as Nixon for polarizing the country as the New Left "accelerated their violent assaults against the government" (p. 126). During a discussion of a Billy Graham pro-war rally, he rips at "rude, chanting demonstrators" who were both "unpatriotic and irreligious" (p. 159). In summary, he assails "the rowdy young protestors, who looked like hippies, used dope and foul language, and seemed to disrespect authority and the flag. They appeared to be part of a movement supporting black, brown, gay, and women's power that was trying to destroy traditional American values and culture" (p. 212).

In contrast to his critique of the antiwar movement, Small goes easy on Johnson and Nixon far too often. He buys into the old canard that the United States won "battle after battle" but lost the war. He apologizes for the televised execution of a Viet Cong prisoner by the Saigon Chief of Police during the Tet offensive of 1968. He repeats the Nixon justifications for the invasion of Cambodia in 1970. He explains away the "atrocities, rapes, and other assaults against civilians" (p. 166) as the natural consequence of warfare. And he often falls in line with the pro-war American faction that waged a ruthless and relentless war against a "bloody, Communist enemy" (p. 195).

If this is representative of current historiography on Vietnam, then the field seems to have hit a roadblock. Under the guise of a political analysis of the domestic impact of Vietnam, Small has provided regurgitated clichés and a conservative attack on many of those opposed to the war. Apparently, if we are to accept Small's version, only middle-class protestors in coats and ties should have been publicly opposing the war, in polite and measured tones at that. It is indeed ironic, and sad, that he is far more critical of those who protested the war than of those who waged it.

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The Shadowlands of Conduct: Ethics and State Politics by Beth A. Rosenson. Washington DC, Georgetown University Press, 2005. 256 pp. \$26.95.

On Saturday, June 30, 1787, Gunning Bedford, Jr., Delegate to the Constitutional Convention from Delaware and James Madison's college roommate, rose to object to what he saw as a corrupt juggernaut of large economic and

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