



Communications

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utilization of more integrative analyses which incorporate topics and join discourses which had previously been isolated from each other.

"Clearly," as Wilkins states, "to understand the decade historians must look to international rather than purely national conditions." The long crisis of the international world political economy extending from World War I through the Great Depression to World War II has made it difficult for any serious scholar to assert the contrary for decades. And surely the role of international banking and multinational corporations and cartels in the increasingly integrated international economy of the 1920s cannot be denied. As I affirmed in my essay, it is the definition of the parallel, and sometimes interrelated development of national, international, and transnational (or multinational) institutions and policies which is the most challenging task of any synthetic history of the decade.

JON JACOBSON
University of California,
Irvine

REVIEWS OF BOOKS

TO THE EDITOR:

Bernard Lewis's book, *The Muslim Discovery of Europe* (1982), has not received fair treatment in the review by Richard Bulliet (*AHR*, 88 [1983]: 439–40). Bulliet briefly acknowledges that this study is an "impressive and useful contribution," a judgment that comes as no surprise, for Lewis is the doyen of English-speaking Middle East historians. But then the reviewer launches into a sustained attack, accusing the author of bias against Islam. The tenor of this study, he argues, is "derisive and condescending toward Muslims to such an extent that the book's analytical value is seriously undermined." This is a powerful charge which, if it is to stick, must be proven.

But there is no proof. Rather, Bulliet, like all those others who make it a practice to defame Lewis, relies on the attribution of malicious intent. Lewis's scholarly objectives are once again subjected to vicious interpretations; the reviewer presumes that Lewis wishes to denigrate Muslims and finds evidence wherever he can, reading dark meanings into even the most innocuous facts. For reasons of space, two examples must suffice to demonstrate the thrust of the whole review; the reader can then judge for himself.

First, Bulliet objects to the title of the book. He argues that *The Muslim Discovery of Europe* makes Muslims look bad: "Why suggest a comparison between the explosion of knowledge and curiosity in Europe and a tepid lack of interest in the lands of Islam if not to show the latter to be deficient?" If so

manifestly neutral a phrase as *The Muslim Discovery of Europe* conveys Muslim deficiency, no title is safe. Can Professor Bulliet suggest an alternative title which would not be susceptible to his criticism ("Glimpses of the Northern Barbarians")? Indeed, the title of Bulliet's own books could be subjected to similar aspersions: thus, *The Patricians of Nishapur* could be understood as fomenting class differences, *Kicked to Death by a Camel* as deriding Arab customs, and *The Tomb of the Twelfth Imam* as ridiculing the Islamic religion.

Second, Lewis observes that Muslims refrained from learning European languages, leaving this domain to their non-Muslim subjects. He then writes of the few exceptions: "By the second quarter of the nineteenth century, the number of [Muslims] able to read a European language was still remarkably small, and many of them were converts or sons or grandsons of converts from Christianity or Judaism to Islam." The point is clear: so much did non-Muslims dominate this sphere of activity that even those few Muslims who did know European languages had a non-Muslim background. Bulliet, however, draws a nasty conclusion from this: for him, Lewis's "implication is that Christian and Jewish mental vigor can persist genetically for some time against Muslim torpor." This not only misrepresents what Lewis says, but—and here I am admittedly speculating—this misrepresentation appears intentional.

To my mind, Professor Bulliet is perhaps the outstanding younger American historian of the Middle East. The originality of his mind and the quality of his writings have assured him a brilliant career; why then, does he join those seeking to establish a reputation through political attacks on Bernard Lewis?

DANIEL PIPES
Department of State

PROFESSOR LEWIS REPLIES:

Please forgive me for writing somewhat belatedly—after an absence of several months abroad—to comment on Mr. Bulliet's attempt to review my book, entitled *The Muslim Discovery of Europe*. Mr. Bulliet's remarks are an exercise in a kind of reviewing which has become increasingly common of late. The method, briefly, is not to review the book but the author; not his scholarship as set forth in the book and its documentation, but the motives which the reviewer, with neither written evidence nor personal acquaintance, chooses to impute to him. Its aim is neither to inform nor to correct but to discredit.

It is customary for an offended author to refer the reader to his book. Mr. Bulliet fortunately makes it unnecessary to impose any such burden.

His handling of the title is sufficient to characterize his method. "Why" he asks, "suggest a comparison between an explosion of knowledge and curiosity in Europe and a tepid lack of interest in the lands of Islam if not to show the latter to be deficient?" An interesting question, which might be applied to Mr. Bulliet's most serious contribution to Islamic studies, a book entitled *The Camel and the Wheel*. Mr. Bulliet is no doubt familiar with the view that the mere mention of a camel, particularly in so prominent a context as a book title, is clear evidence of deep-rooted hostility to the Arabs and of a desire to play on negative stereotypes. The reference to the wheel in the title of a book mainly devoted to discussing why the Arabs made so little use of it, is obviously a sneer at their technological backwardness.

This is of course nonsense—but no more so than Mr. Bulliet's own exegesis of *The Muslim Discovery of Europe*. The Humpty-Dumpty method of interpretation is also used on some other points in the book. One example may suffice. I had observed that educated Muslims until a late date were unwilling to learn European languages. Mr. Bulliet counters indignantly by pointing to their study of Arabic, Persian, and Turkish which are very difficult languages. Mr. Bulliet thus blurs the distinction between willing and able—whether through his own unwillingness or inability to see it, I am unable to say. The same question arises concerning some of Mr. Bulliet's other interpretations, such as the "implication" which he claims to find—citing p. 301—"that the Islamic religion propagates [*sic*] primarily by warfare." There is no such implication, neither on page 301 nor on any other, and Mr. Bulliet might credit me with the rudimentary knowledge of Islamic history required to know that such an "implication" is false.

BERNARD LEWIS
Princeton University

TO THE EDITOR:

As a book reviewer for the *American Historical Review* for the past fifteen years, I find the notice of my recent book, *Rebellion and Riot: Popular Disorder in England during the Reign of Edward VI* (*AHR*, 88 [1983]: 670) a clear departure from your guidelines. The reviewer's analysis is inaccurate, and his evaluation is biased. He also knows that records giving deeper insight into the rebels' motives do not exist. The reviewer may have enjoyed writing this polemic, but readers will have to consult other journals for a responsible review of *Rebellion and Riot*.

BARRETT L. BEER
Kent State University

PROFESSOR HOAK REPLIES:

In a form-letter sent to this prospective reviewer in August 1982, the Editors of the *AHR* enumerated

six guidelines. Five comprehended mechanical and stylistic points ("... Leave the top half of the first page blank ...," etc.). The remaining one spelled out the only substantive charge ever conveyed to me: "The review should give a clear statement of the book's contents and a critical assessment of its contributions to knowledge in its field."

In my review, in four paragraphs of roughly equal length (about 125 words each), I tried successively to (1) suggest the nature and significance of the period and subject in question; (2) reveal the purpose and scope of the book (I quoted the author's self-stated aims); (3) identify the relevant topics treated and indicate the proportion of the whole given over to each; (4) provide, in light of recent research on the subject, the "critical assessment" demanded by the Editors. Stylistically, I found it natural to weave some of the assessment into the second and third paragraphs as well.

Did you, sir, find my review "a clear departure from your guidelines"?

In any case, where are the inaccuracies Professor Beer alleges to have found? He specified none.

I possess no knowledge of the nonexistence of records of the type to which Beer refers. It was not Beer's sources, but his outmoded methodology that failed him: he was not able adequately to describe the context of the rebels' actions. Why he was not able to do so remains puzzling, since for Kett's Rebellion, at least, he had before him the contextual example provided by Diarmaid MacCulloch in 1979—all of which I pointed out in my review. If this be polemic. . . .

Bias of some sort stamps the work of every historian. Professor Beer's apparently predisposed him to appreciate only those reviews which would favor his book. I know my own biases, and they are clearly not the ones imagined by Beer, since he failed to recognize how much I value first-class historical scholarship.

DALE HOAK
College of William and
Mary

TO THE EDITOR:

Despite (or because of) being both a former history major and a member of the Book-of-the-Month Club, I had no intention of buying Leonard Mosley's *Marshall: Hero for Our Times*. After reading Warren I. Cohen's highly entertaining review (*AHR*, 88 [1983]: 776–77), however, I have a problem. Whenever I pass a bookstore, I feel an almost overwhelming desire to know what secret the "Hero's" first wife told him on their wedding night. Dr. Cohen, help me before I buy this book!

BURDEN S. LUNDGREN
Norfolk, Virginia