That publicists, journalists, and historians occasionally seek to
revise prevailing interpretations of past events ought to surprise
no one, for "revisionist historiography is almost as old as history
itself,"¹ and has been undertaken for a wide variety of reasons.
"Official" histories, often in the form of memoirs, and "orthodox"
interpretations, usually written in the immediate aftermath of the
event, cannot hope to provide totally satisfactory answers to every
retrospective question. The discovery of new documentary evi-
dence, altered political circumstances, the need to justify contem-
porary partisan positions, and even boredom or perversity have, in
differing degrees, motivated attempts to revise conventional wisdom.

Although history as a scholarly and professional enterprise
emerged in America during the last decades of the nineteenth
century, this discipline was not convulsed by a serious revisionist
controversy surrounding a foreign policy issue until the 1920s. In
light of this nation's sporadic involvement in international affairs
before 1917, the relative disinterest of academe in American
diplomacy is not mysterious. More surprising, perhaps, is the re-
markable acceptance that the revisionist interpretation of American
participation in World War I had received by the mid-1930s. What
began as a distinctly minority view with the publication of Sidney
Fay's "New Light on the Origins of the World War"² in 1920 soon
emerged as the new orthodoxy with the appearance of revisionist
books by Fay, Charles A. Beard, Harry Elmer Barnes, Walter
Millis, and C. Hartley Grattan.³ By focusing on the issues of

616-39.
³ Warren I. Cohen, The American Revisionists, (Chicago: University of
German war guilt, Allied war aims, Wilson's alleged idealism, and the roles played by munitions makers and international financiers, these revisionist historians revealed a deep disillusionment about American involvement in the Great War. According to Robert E. Osgood, these men were, generally, sensitive liberals who, if they had supported the war at all, had only done so "with the expectation that it would result in the fulfillment of Wilson's visions."

When the peace failed to produce a global collective security system comprised of self-determined democratic states, these revisionists condemned the war that was ostensibly waged to create such a structure. But they desired to do more than reinterpret the diplomacy of World War I. Led by Charles Beard, the most prolific and widely-read of the scholarly revisionists, this group of historians proposed specific foreign policies designed to prevent America from recommitting the mistakes of 1914-19. For example, by 1936, Beard had offered a program of "mandatory neutrality" which would have embargoed "the sale of munitions and the extension of credits to warring powers" while severely restricting "sales to other neutrals who were engaged in reselling to beligerents." 5 If the American economy could not adjust to the consequent disruption of international trade, then capitalism, Beard argued, ought to be scrapped. The revisionist cause gained its most impressive (if temporary) ally in August of that year when Franklin D. Roosevelt in his Chautauqua address defended the traditional American principle of non-intervention and pledged that "if we face the choice of profits or peace, the nation will answer--must answer--we choose peace." 5 But as the shattering international events of the late 1930s threatened to draw the United States once more into war, Beard and other revisionists were hard-pressed to maintain that the Axis threat was no more dangerous to the American national interest than had been the Central Powers. Indeed, in the aftermath of World War II it became increasingly fashionable to condemn both the history and the politics of the revisionists. Dexter Perkins, writing in 1947, claimed that "they assisted the rise of Hitler and the loss of the 'first peace,' " 7 while in an oft-quoted remark of 1949, Edward Mead Earle decried the

5 The American Revisionists, p. x.
7 The American Revisionists, p. x.
intellectual consequences of revisionism: “A good deal of historical teaching, as well as historical writing, was the direct cause, if not the only cause, of the cynicism and intellectual nihilism which determined the climate of our university campuses for twenty years.” In short, a dozen years after Chautauqua these revisionists were regularly equated with isolationism, appeasement, culpability in precipitating World War II, and moral cretinism. Yet, in an important sense, these historians had contributed to their own downfall by engaging in the same excesses that characterized the work of their harsher critics of the 1940s. Noting the revisionists’ “preoccupation with the mendacity of Franklin D. Roosevelt,” Warren Kimball has claimed that “in spite of occasional insights, numerous hard and valid questions, and a potentially viable thesis, these [i.e., Beard and Barnes] and other historians vitiated their own arguments by their intemperance and nastiness.” By 1950, therefore, both the revisionist critique of American diplomacy from Sarajevo to Versailles and the revisionist program for avoiding new American entanglements in Europe and Asia had been reduced to rubble.

II

Despite the bewildering complexity of American foreign relations during and immediately after World War II, historians in the United States were remarkably loath to produce revisionist accounts of the origins of the Cold War. Although Sidney Fay’s reinterpretations were published less than two years after the Central Powers sued for peace, the first important scholarly revision of recent American diplomacy was not published until 1959. The belated appearance of such works is not puzzling to Walter Laqueur who believes that the origins of both World War II and the Cold War betrayed a clarity which the diplomacy of the Great War did not possess. And since little new evidence concerning the war years (Laqueur ignores the post-war period) has subsequently come to light, it is little wonder that “the revisionist version of the period has less to do with the discovery of new sources

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than with changes that have taken place in the perspective and mood of historians themselves.” 11 With the memoirs and diaries of Allied War leaders in print by 1950 (though the publication of Foreign Relations of the United States for these years lagged far behind) and with the Kremlin archives tightly locked, Laqueur argues that nothing remained but for old documents to be read by new eyes.

The first revisions of the 1943-46 period were journalistic and came from the political right. Focusing primarily on the allegedly defective nature of Roosevelt’s personality and policies, such accounts condemned FDR for “surrendering” Eastern Europe to the Soviets and for naively believing in the guarantees offered by Stalin. 12

Memoirs began to appear in 1947. These reminiscences were by and large spirited defenses of American diplomacy before, during, and after the war. 13 Stressing the consistently demonstrated good intentions of American dealings with Stalin, these accounts emphasized Russian xenophobia, obsession with security, absolutism, and awesome ignorance of the West.

By the end of the 1940s a broad consensus among American historians over Soviet-American wartime and post-war relations was evident. By depicting America as a well-intentioned, if occasionally naive and short-sighted nation, drawn into a major confrontation with a tendentious, often bellicose and aggressive Soviet Union, this view stressed the necessity of Truman’s response to Russian hostility and ambition. While acknowledging genuine reasons for Soviet suspicions of the West (e.g., Marxist-Leninist ideology, the interventions after World War I, the long period of American non-recognition, the construction of the cordon sanitaire at Versailles, the extended delay of the promised Second Front during World War II, the precipitous halt to Lend Lease in 1945, and reasonable Russian needs for security against another invasion from the West), these historians nonetheless placed primary blame for the Cold War on Stalin’s uncompromising policies in Eastern Europe.

11 “Rewriting History,” p. 54.
While there were important differences in emphasis regarding the motivations, sources, and ultimate goals of Soviet foreign policy, few ambiguities surrounded these analyses of America’s diplomatic performances. The methods may, at times, have been fumbling, but American ends were relatively clear: “the political independence and economic revival of other nations, social reform, and the cooperation of all countries in the United Nations.” 14 In contrast, by its brutal actions in Poland, Rumania, Hungary, Bulgaria, and later Czechoslovakia, its refusal to treat Germany as an economic unit, its support of Mao and the Greek insurgents, its sabotage of the U.N. Security Council, its rejection of Marshall Plan aid, and its imposition of the Berlin blockade, the Soviet Union stymied all Western efforts to maintain the Grand Alliance.15 This set of interpretations quickly became the prevailing orthodoxy and the standard against which all subsequent scholarly American accounts of Cold War origins were judged. From the vantage point of 1967 Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. succinctly summarized this position:

The orthodox American view, as originally set forth by the American government and as reaffirmed until recently by most American scholars, has been that the Cold War was the brave and essential response of free men to communist aggression.16

To reiterate, scholarly revisions of American diplomacy during World War II and the early years of the Cold War did not appear during the 1940’s. One of the first was American-Russian Relations, 1781-194717 by William Appleman Williams, then an obscure Assistant Professor of History at the University of Oregon. This volume, published in 1952, purported to survey a century and a half of Russo-American diplomacy, but dealt primarily with relations since 1905. Its significance lay in Williams’ attempts to characterize Truman’s economic policies toward the Soviet Union as

self-serving and in his suggestion that the extreme secrecy surrounding the Manhattan Project needlessly provoked Stalin’s suspicions. Though *American-Russian Relations, 1781-1947* appeared at the high tide of Cold War hostility, the volume was not greeted with unanimous opprobrium. While William Henry Chamberlin branded it as “an unfortunate example of scholarly research” with “a persistent tendency to see only the Soviet, never the American side of the case,” others called the book “provocative” and perceived it as “an acute analysis,” and “a real contribution.” In contrast, Williams’ second excursion into interpretative history, *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy,* created a storm of controversy. Foster Rhea Dulles considered it “argument rather than diplomatic history,” though despite “its exaggeration and overemphasis a highly interesting contribution to today’s great foreign policy debate.” Less reserved was Charles A. McClelland, who argued that “this book cannot be taken seriously as history” and likened it to the single-factor analyses of the interwar revisionists. Writing in the *New Republic* Robert W. Tucker suggested that Williams seemed to have tried to encourage the judgment that *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy* was “little more than a confusing concoction of the ‘devil theory’ of diplomacy and war and of a thinly disguised Marxism.” On the other hand, A. A. Berle, though evincing “profound disagreements” with many of Williams’ statements and “some of his conclusions,” called the book “brilliant,” “courageous” and “essential.” Both *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy* and D. F. Fleming’s *The Cold War and Its Origins* constituted fledgling revisionist critiques of twentieth century United States foreign policy. But their impact was blunted by the appearance of a series of semi-official histories written by two Washington “insiders,” Herbert Feis and George F. Kennan. Feis, a former State Department official; had received special permission

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23 *The American Historical Review,* Vol. 64, No. 3 (July, 1959), p. 1022.
to use the Department archives and the Truman and Harriman papers. The early results of his labors, *Churchill, Roosevelt, Stalin: The War They Waged and the Peace They Sought* (Princeton, 1957), and *Between War and Peace: The Potsdam Conference* (Princeton, 1960), were richly documented and intricately detailed tapestries of high-level conversations. Throughout the volumes Feis undertook a spirited defense of Roosevelt and Truman while contending that the Soviets sought considerably more than a traditional security corridor in Eastern Europe. George F. Kennan, whose earlier writings had criticized the “legalistic-moralistic” tradition in American foreign policy, extended this theme in *Russia and the West Under Lenin and Stalin.* Here Kennan critically depicted a myopically misinformed, if sincere and well intentioned, America. His assessment of Russia’s behavior, however, and of the origins of the Cold War tended to support the prevailing orthodox interpretations. A decade and a half after the Axis surrender, then, a revisionist historiography had barely emerged, and despite the pioneering efforts of Williams and Fleming the orthodox account of the Cold War origins remained virtually unchallenged.

And orthodoxy continued to prevail until the intervention of one contemporary event: Vietnam. In the words of Lloyd Gardner, “What had been a small, if steadily growing, body of ‘revisionist’ literature suddenly became the inspiration for a copious outpouring of articles and books reopening historical questions once thought settled or of so little importance as to be forgotten.” Older themes like the Monroe Doctrine, the foreign policy of William Seward, and the Philippine insurrection joined the more recent issues of Yalta, Potsdam, and Hiroshima as targets for the revisionist assault. Indeed, the whole sweep of American diplomacy was subjected to searching and sometimes bitter reinterpretations. The Vietnam trauma, which was so instrumental in challenging the legitimacy of both public and private American institutions, likewise severely undermined the credibility of orthodox accounts of American foreign policy.

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It is, however, unclear whether or not the Vietnam debate was exclusively responsible for this efflorescence of revisionism. Was it simply the failures of Johnson, Rusk, and Rostow which encouraged a new generation of historians to attack Truman, Marshall, and Kennan? Was it merely a series of contemporary events which prompted a full-scale reconsideration of America’s diplomatic history, or were additional elements at work? Opinion is deeply divided on the issue and perhaps a definitive answer to this complex question is not yet possible. It does seem reasonably clear, however, that the shrill intensity of the Vietnam debate was also characteristic of the orthodox-revisionist academic controversy about the meaning of the American diplomatic record.

The growing prickliness of this latter debate was evident by the late 1960s and is well-illustrated by the public exchanges between Gar Alperovitz and Herbert Feis, two leading figures in the orthodox-revisionist confrontation. Alperovitz, a former student of William Appleman Williams, sent shock waves rippling through the American historical community in 1965 with *Atomic Diplomacy: Hiroshima and Potsdam* which argued that the primary reason for the employment of the atomic bomb against the Japanese was not military contingency but, rather, part of a diplomatic strategy whose goal was American political and economic access to Eastern Europe. When Herbert Feis published *The Atomic Bomb and the End of World War II* the following year, Alperovitz quickly retaliated in *The New York Review of Books*.

Alperovitz charged that Feis was “close to being our official national historian” because of his “privileged access to important sources” and in view of his role as “special consultant to three Secretaries of War.” Feis, then, had written a “sober but uncertain book which ‘tried to fit new material into old molds, while avoiding serious criticism of the eminent officials he has known.’” Alperovitz sarcastically suggested “one must sympathize with an author who has been a consultant to three Secretaries of War.” He concluded that one would also like to believe that the sole motive of the eminent men he knew was to save lives. It is not pleasant to think that they

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24 Ibid., p. 52.
were so fascinated by their new ‘master card’ of diplomacy that they scarcely considered the moral implications of their act when they used it.”

This, of course, was precisely the meaning of the evidence to Alperovitz.

Herbert Feis reacted to Alperovitz’s critique by completely denying that the Government had in any way assisted in the preparation of *The Atomic Bomb and the End of World War II* and by decrying the slowness with which the State Department had made diplomatic records available to historians. Citing his attempts to induce Washington to speed up that process of disclosure Feis urged Alperovitz to do likewise. As Feis put it, “since Alperovitz, like myself, is interested in the origins of the Cold War,” let him “call on the Soviet Government—which he apparently thinks was merely the helpless object of our vicious diplomacy—to do the same.” Finally, Feis accused Alperovitz of unfairly impugning “my judgment “because of my previous personal or professional connection with some of the chief figures of the narrative.”

Alperovitz replied by labelling Feis’ letter a “strangely ambiguous” piece, which “like his book . . . never quite faces fundamental issues squarely.” Additionally, Alperovitz found Feis’ disavowal of governmental connections both “curiously defensive” and reflective of a total misunderstanding of his actual intentions.” Because Feis insisted on confining himself to “general remarks about preconceptions and hindsight” instead of raising “documented, expert objections,” Alperovitz puzzled whether, in the end, Feis held any “substantive objections at all” to his revisionist thesis.

While not vicious or bitter in itself, the Feis-Alperovitz exchange does indicate that the intensity of the debate surrounding these alternative accounts grew significantly as revisionist interpretations became more numerous and popular during the 1960s. Motives were increasingly questioned, *ad hominem* arguments were advanced with more regularity, and what had heretofore been a scholarly controversy threatened to erupt into a kind of “cold war” among historians.

35 Ibid.
36 Ibid., p. 133, 135.
37 Ibid., p. 134.
38 Ibid., p. 135.
39 Ibid., p. 136.
40 Ibid.
The book which did more, perhaps, than any other to polarize important parts of the American historical community into warring camps was Robert James Maddox, The New Left and the Origins of the Cold War, published by Princeton University Press in the spring of 1973. This little volume—a very short 161 pages including the Introduction—subjects to scrutiny seven leading contributions to “New Left” revisionism.” Maddox begins by expressing his gratitude to the “late Herbert Feis for having persuaded me to put aside another project temporarily in order to complete this work.” He then argues that “in recent years the most controversial issue in American diplomatic history has been the origins of the Cold War” largely because “a number of scholars more or less identified with the New Left . . . have mounted a formidable attack on the conventional wisdom.” These scholars, although they “disagree among themselves on a wide range of specific issues . . . tend to divide into two recognizable groups.” There are “the ‘soft’ revisionists, who place far more emphasis upon individuals than they do on the nature of institutions or systems” and who contend that “the Cold War came about because of the failure of American statemanship,” and the “hard revisionists, who believe that the Cold War was the inevitable result of the American system as it developed over the years” and was “based upon what American leaders perceived as the need for continuous economic expansion abroad because of the nature of America’s corporate structure.” The “hards” interpret “the events of World War II and its immediate aftermath . . . merely as a phase—the latest being the American intervention in Vietnam—of the ongoing struggle between a conservative capitalist order and world revolution.”


II


Ibid., p. 3.

Ibid., p. 4.

Ibid., pp. 4-5.
Maddox claims that "most of the revisionists frankly proclaim that they conceive of their work as a tool for change" with "the 'softs' wishing to influence present policy by demonstrating past errors" and "the 'hards' . showing the need for a radical re-structuring of the existing system." The revisionists must believe that "the historian's job, therefore, is to create a version of the past which can be used to help achieve the goals his ideological preferences dictate."

But that is not all, for "some of the revisionists, without denying the influence of ideology, have also questioned the integrity of their orthodox colleagues." Maddox argues that Williams has accused orthodox historians of tampering with "the facts as they exist" and that Horowitz has attacked orthodox scholars for consciously promoting the State Department line." To Maddox the conclusions drawn by Williams and Horowitz are clear enough: "only the revisionists possess sufficient courage to reveal truths which must have been obvious to even the most dull-witted orthodox scholar." Curiously, "orthodox historians have responded" with "far greater tolerance toward their New Left critics than the latter have granted them," though "very recently there have appeared the kinds of sophisticated analyses of revisionist works that the significance of the questions raised clearly warrants." Maddox mentions a few of their "more obvious complaints:"

1. A revisionist double-standard whereby "Russia's actions are justified or explained by reference to national security or Realpolitik" while "Western actions are measured against some high ideal and found wanting."
2. A tendency by "New Left authors to exaggerate the importance of evidence which supports their themes and to minimize or ignore materials which do not."
3. A revisionist desire to "all too often proceed to judge Stalin's actions as though they were privy to his most confidential thoughts" with the consequences that "they almost invariably construe his policies in the most favorable light."
Yet these points do not form the essence of Maddox’s critique of “New Left” revisionism, for he admits that “certainly orthodox historians have been guilty of precisely those charges now being levied against New Left scholars.” Indeed, Maddox agrees that “thus far the debate has proceeded along lines similar to countless historiographical disputes over the years.”

Rather, it is his bold assertion that the seven books considered in The New Left and the Origins of the Cold War “without exception are based upon pervasive misusages of the source materials . . .” so that “even the best fails to attain the most flexible definition of scholarship” that distinguishes Maddox’s attack. Thus, “the most striking characteristic of revisionist historiography has been the extent to which New Left authors have revised the evidence itself,” . . . and “until this fact is recognized, there can be no realistic assessment of which elements of revisionism can justifiably be incorporated into new syntheses and which must be discarded altogether.” In order to reach this startling conclusion Maddox subjected these seven works “to a very simple test” and “compared the evidence as presented by the revisionists with the sources from which the evidence was taken.” In the course of the next seven chapter Maddox painstakingly escorts the reader through portions of each of them.

Characterizing these books as “polemics” which indulge in “lamentable” practices, Maddox notes that despite their distortions, these “bold” and “provocative” interpretations have earned fame and academic advancement for their authors. But “what of the publishers of these books?” Did the scholars from whom they sought advice “before agreeing to publish these books fail to report the methods employed in them?” Or, rather, did these publishers ignore their complaints “on the ground that these volumes were ‘controversial,’ ” and “hence eminently salable?” The actions of these prestigious publishing houses may have damaged traditional faith in the integrity of their imprimatur and the assumption that “the material has been subjected to (and passed) rigorous critical examination.”

55 Ibid.
56 Ibid., p. 10.
57 Ibid. Emphasis in the original.
58 Ibid., pp. 10-11.
59 Ibid., p. 10.
60 Ibid., p. 10.
Even less excusable, according to Maddox, "is the fact that experts in diplomatic history, writing in influential journals, have failed to call attention to such practices. Hence their reviews have had the effect of endorsing these revisionist works as responsible pieces of historical research, their disagreements with specific interpretations notwithstanding." All in all, these unfortunate circumstances reflect "a striking malfunctioning of the critical mechanisms within the historical profession."

But why have ordinarily exacting reviewers "shown a most extraordinary reluctance to expose even the most obvious New Left fictions"? First, some of these reviewers may simply have been so unfamiliar with the evidence that they were unable to discover any discrepancies. And second-a "far more intriguing possibility," perhaps "reviewers who were perfectly aware of the procedures employed nevertheless concluded that it, was unnecessary to share this information with their readers." The motives of these scholars, "like those of the revisionists themselves, can only be surmised," but Maddox believes that his own "personal experiences can shed some light" on this issue.

Maddox's "personal experiences" concern preliminary versions of the chapters contained in *The New Left and the Origins of the Cold War* which were sent to several leading diplomatic historians, many of whom "commented on the desirability of making the material contained available to the widest possible audience." Some scholars apparently believed that "this type of work ought not to...

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61 Ibid., pp. 159-60. To underscore this point Professor Maddox kindly forwarded to this reviewer "a critique of Kolko's book written by a prominent military-diplomatic historian whose name I am not free to divulge (I could tell you many stories about people who have complimented me one way or another privately, but are unwilling to take a position publicly...)". This critique concludes with the following sentences, "The point is that Kolko does not know what he is talking about, and cannot therefore be taken seriously. What I am chiefly concerned with is Random House's responsibility in publishing this book (would Knopf have printed it?). Kolko-and Random House-can say what they want, but next time please get the basic story correct. Place the right men in the right place at the right time. Have them do what they really did. When you receive a manuscript from someone who is working in a new field, in short, check with an expert reader before publication. You owe us all that much at least." (Personal communication October 22, 1976).

62 Ibid., p. 160.
63 Ibid.
64 Ibid.
65 Ibid.
66 Ibid.
be published,” but not because they “questioned the accuracy of the analyses themselves.” Maddox suggests, argued that “critiques centering on factual matters were irrelevant to the basic issue” between revisionist and orthodox historians, which “as one individual put it, is whether or not ideas or institutions are the controlling factor in historical development.” Maddox was advised, rather, to “challenge [the revisionist historian] on his basic assumptions about the nature of American institutions and how policies are formulated and for what end, not on whether he was correct on . . . [the material contained in the essay].” Maddox likens this attitude, to the actions of the behavioral scientist who instead of “examining either the experiments or the subject of those experiments would have engaged . . . in a debate over his ‘basic assumptions about the nature’ of rodents.”

Then, there was a second group of nay-sayers who, according to Maddox, “exhibited relatively little concern over accuracy or relevance,” but rather “expressed reservations over the propriety of publishing ... the charges substantiated in the essays.” Maddox contends that the question for this group of historians “was not whether did compromise his scholarly obligations, but whether one ought to call attention to the possibility of it.” To allow “revisionist methodologies to go unchallenged” is to fail “to perform an essential task.” The ominous results of this neglect had become all too obvious, for in a 1971 survey Robert L. Beisner found that “those books which had the greatest effect on students sharply critical of contemporary U. S. foreign policy” were those by Williams, Kolko, Alperovitz, and Horowitz. Because editors of anthologies which seek to exemplify ‘conflicting interpretations’ have, “like the book reviewers, thus far . . . refrained from pointing out even the most obvious distortions these excerpts contain, . . . students (or any other readers) who do not consult or have access to the documents have no way of distinguishing between those interpretations based upon the evidence as presented by the revisionists.”

48 Ibid., p. 162.
49 Ibid., p. 162. Ellipses and second set of brackets in the original.
50 Ibid., p. 162. Ellipses and second set of brackets in the original.
51 Ibid.
52 Ibid. Emphasis in the original.
53 Ibid.
54 Ibid., p. 163.
55 Ibid., pp. 163-4.
Maddox concludes with an extremely provocative question: "Perhaps, after all, the New Left view of American foreign policy during and immediately after World War II can only be sustained by doing violence to the historical record?" 

Clearly, then, *The New Left and the Origins of the Cold War* is not just another critique of revisionist historiography, for in addition to the usual charges levelled against the revisionists (i.e., a double-standard; etc.) Maddox adds the following:

1. That seven leading scholars systematically and pervasively distorted the historical evidence through a variety of disreputable techniques in order to sustain probably otherwise unsupportable theses.
2. That respected publishers, professional reviewers, and editors have for a variety of questionable motives shunned their collective responsibility to expose the fallacious methodologies of these historians.

Not surprisingly, *The New Left and the Origins of the Cold War* engulfed the American historical community (and parts of the wider public as well) in a raging maelstrom of controversy. The battle-lines were rapidly and predictably drawn with an early salvo fired by the orthodox historian, Francis Loewenheim, in *The New York Times Book Review*. Hailing Maddox’s volume as “an important subject” which “tells us that: . . . admiration and respect for the ‘New Left’ historians is entirely unfounded,” Loewenheim argued that the book “is a harsh indictment . . . but fully supported by Maddox’s lucid and impressively detailed account.” *The New Left and the Origins of the Cold War* “deserves—indeed it demands—the attention of everyone interested in recent American foreign policy, and of the many of us who have been misled about that policy . . . Then, after each of the seven revisionist historians responded, Loewenheim claimed that ‘abusive language . . . is not an effective response to Maddox’s important book, and there is nothing in these replies to challenge, much less contradict, Maddox’s central thesis that the New Left revisionists almost always employ a double-standard...”

75 Ibid., p. 164. Emphasis in original.
76 *The New York Times Book Review*, pp. 6 and 10. As we have sought to show, however, the “double-standard” argument is not the central thesis of Maddox’s book.
Ronald Radosh quickly counter-attacked by claiming that Maddox had first misstated and misinterpreted the revisionists' arguments and then destroyed these "carefully constructed" straw men with "a series of scatter-gun attacks." By "picking out certain paragraphs, statements, and arguments in the attempt to prove that the source materials were either tampered with or else prove the opposite of what the revisionist author claims," Maddox's approach, Radosh contended, allowed him "to avoid confronting the broad themes and analyses presented by each author." For Radosh this "book had a single purpose: to end the dialogue with the revisionists about the origins of the cold war, [and] to take us back to the days when all truth was thought to reside with the State Department."7

Those attacked by Maddox responded in various ways. Gar Alperovitz attempted a rebuttal in The Journal of American History;8 Gabriel Kolko, David Horowitz, and Lloyd Gardner circulated elaborate refutations within the historical profession; and Horowitz supplemented his reply with incendiary remarks in Ramparts.80 There Horowitz accused Maddox of the basest motives in writing The New Left and the Origins of the Cold War (e.g., revenge, jealousy, and "personal animus").81 Moreover, Horowitz added, "not only [Herbert] Feis, but George Kennan, now at Princeton's Institute for Advanced Study, former State Department planner Eugene Rostow, and [Arthur] Schlesinger, [Jr.], himself, had all joined as a lobby for the "publication of the Maddox book, despite the doubts and hesitation of more objective readers."82

This last statement had the immediate effect of centrally embroiling the publisher; Princeton University Press, in the developing storm. Had The New Left and the Origins of the Cold War been published because of "the lobbying efforts of a conspiracy of Cold War liberals"? The issue was soon aired in a series of articles and letters in The Daily Princetonian during the autumn of 1973. It was disclosed in this newspaper that Horowitz had sent to Sanford G. Thatcher, social sciences editor of the press, and the rest of the Editorial Board, an open letter dated May 29, 1973 which "argued that Maddox's book so exceeds the limits of reasonable

8 Ibid.
81 Ibid., p. 60.
82 Ibid., p. 62.
debate, is so systematically and relentlessly dishonest in its presenta-
tion of the work which it attacks as to deprive it of any intellectual
value whatsoever and to render its impact simply pernicious.' "83
Given these circumstances, Horowitz continued, "it would have
seemed an elementary caution (let alone decency) to have solicited
opinions. "84 The Daily Princetonian asserted that in 1971 Feis and
Kennan had strongly urged Maddox to write 'more articles attacking
the 'revisionists',' and had subsequently written letters of
recommendation to Princeton University Press in support of Maddox's manuscript. "85
In response to these articles Thatcher claimed that both readers
had agreed "on the basic soundness of Maddox's work, and it is
primarily this question which we rely upon outside readers to
answer." As for the motives behind such a book, Thatcher believed
that Maddox was 'astonished by "the liberties revisionist historians
were taking in their use of evidence," and it was this factor alone
which prompted his book. Thatcher complained, "it is particularly
regrettable, therefore, that those who reviewed the book in various
media largely failed to address the major historiographical question
which the book raised, preferring instead to focus on peripheral
issues, such as the author's style and the book's 'political implica-
tions.' " Unfortunately," Thatcher concluded, "it now seems that
Gabriel Kolko, and perhaps others who share his views will be
attempting to block submission of such [i.e., revisionist] manuscripts
by engaging in some sort of boycott against the Press, in reprisal for
our publication of Maddox's book.""86
In any event, The New Left and the Origins of the Cold War
precipitated a debate of almost unprecedented bitterness in the
American historical community and threatened to enmesh this
temporary orthodox-revisionist controversy in the same kind of

83 The Daily Princetonian, October 18, 1973, p. 3.
85 Ibid., p. 9.
86 The Daily Princetonian, October 25, 1973, p. 2. In a personal communica-
tion to this reviewer dated December 10, 1976 Mr. Thatcher suggested that "I
have no reason to believe that any boycott has been mounted against us as Pro-
fessor Kolko once threatened. We continue to receive all sorts of manuscripts on
the Cold War, revisionist and otherwise." Professor Maddox is not quite so cer-
tain, for in another personal communication (October 11, 1976) he opined that
"your first question-about 'pressures' being applied against my book-is difficult
to answer. I have heard that there were, but have no substantial evidence on
unbridled acrimony which characterized the later stages of the foreign policy debate of the interwar years.

Before the substantial historiographic issues raised by Maddox in the course of his assault upon these revisionist historians can be evaluated, a major puzzle of The New Left and the Origins of the Cold War must be addressed: Maddox’s apparent failure to define the political label displayed so prominently in the title of the book. What is the “New Left”? What are those assumptions, arguments, and policies which distinguish it from the “Old Left” or, for that matter, from the political Right? Inexplicably, Maddox never confronts these crucial questions. It is only in the most roundabout manner that the reader can gain any notion at all of Maddox’s use of the term New Left.

As indicated earlier in this essay Maddox, in his Introduction, seeks to distinguish “soft” revisionists, who emphasize personality factors, from “hard” revisionists, who chastize American institutions. He never refers to this distinction again, however, nor does he apply it (with a single exception) to the seven scholars he evaluates. Maddox does not relate this “hard-soft” dichotomy to the “New Left,” so the reader is unsure whether all revisionists belong to this political grouping or whether Maddox’s distinction has any relevance at all to this question.

And the puzzle deepens when Maddox asserts (at the beginning of Chapter 2) that “pinning labels on historians is a hazardous enterprise at best, but in general the terms ‘New Left’ and ‘revisionist’ are synonymous when applied to interpretations of how the Cold War began.” The clear implication is that the “New Left” consists of all revisionists, both “soft” and “hard.” Yet Maddox explains, in the very next sentence, that D. F. Fleming is “an exception because he is actually an unreconstructed Wilsonian, and not a critic of the American system as such.” That is, Fleming is a “soft” revisionist. By now the reader has become thoroughly confused and, to make any sense out of Maddox’s distinctions, must conclude that the New Left is composed of those revisionists who are critics “of the American system as such.” Even if this is Maddox’s...
meaning, it hardly constitutes an adequate definition of the "New Left."

Given these conceptual difficulties, why has Maddox inserted the term "New Left" in the volume's title? Clearly, all sorts of leftists (and some rightists as well) qualify as critics of America's institutions. It seems likely that Maddox's decision to employ this partially loaded term was primarily a political one. Only David Horowitz (and possibly Gabriel Kolko and William Appleman Williams) had roles of any prominence in the "Movement" of the 1960s. Despite this fact Maddox has included all but one of these historians under an exceedingly ambiguous "New Left" umbrella. Why? Because of the vague manner with which he employs the term "New Left," the inescapable conclusion is that Maddox seeks to buttress his methodological criticisms of these left-leaning scholars by inferring some sort of associational (or conspiratorial) guilt. For Maddox to portray them as "New Left" historians not only suggests the existence of a "party line" bordering on conspiracy but also glosses over the important point that significant qualitative differences distinguish these authors' works.

If Maddox's intention is to identify and impugn a "New Left" historical school; why does he devote a chapter to D. F. Fleming's *The Cold War and Its Origins*, a volume written by "an unreconstructed Wilsonian and not a critic of the American system as such"? Because as Maddox answers, Fleming is "usually (if indiscriminately) lumped together with the New Left and, more importantly, because a number of his interpretations of specific issues have become standard in New Left historiography." This explanation is strange, first, because Maddox fails to specify who "lumps" Fleming with the "New Left," and second, because Maddox implies that Fleming deserves analysis because the "New Left" subsequently adopted many of his arguments. The further inference is that if Maddox can undermine Fleming's interpretations, then the validity of the "New Left" case will thereby suffer.

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89 Horowitz was an editor of *Root and Branch: A Radical Quarterly* and *Ramparts* and participated in the Berkeley Free Speech Movement. In the 1950s Kolko served as executive secretary of the socialist Student League for Industrial Democracy (a direct ancestor of SDS), while Williams, though he personally eschewed political activism, maintained close ties with a number of socialist organizations.

Interestingly, of the six "New Left" books considered by Maddox only David Horowitz admits any intellectual debt to Fleming. Lloyd Gardner refers to him in a partially critical manner in a bibliographic essay in *Architects of Illusion*, Gar Alperovitz mentions him in one footnote in *Atomic Diplomacy*, while Williams, Clemens, and Kolko make no references at all. Now Maddox may be correct in claiming that Fleming is an intellectual father of "New Left" history, but to prove his contention he must do more than discover a coincidence of "interpretations of specific issues" between Fleming and the "New Left."

Maddox’s critique of *The Cold War and Its Origins* rests on two points: (1) Fleming’s willingness "to accept on faith Stalin’s words"; and (2) his "heavy reliance upon journalistic sources" throughout the book. Both of these criticisms of Fleming are well-taken. One can easily agree with Maddox that whereas Fleming "usually analyzed the statements of American leaders within the context of their actions (rightly so, whether or not one agrees with his conclusions), he exhibited a trust in Stalin that can only be described as touching." Similarly, Maddox’s claim that "time after time he substantiated one point or another by substituting for evidence (or his own analysis) the opinion of some journalist with whose views he agreed" seems fully vindicated. But these criticisms are hardly new. When Fleming’s book appeared in 1961 it was greeted with reviews that largely noted the same weaknesses that Maddox stresses a dozen years later. For example, Henry L. Roberts argued that Fleming failed “to look inside Russia at the motivations of Soviet policy” and ignored the fact that “Soviet leaders think as Communists, not as American critics of American policies;” Geoffrey Barraclough chastised Fleming for “a far too ready use of ephemeral newspaper gossip;” and *The American Political Science Review* emphasized both the "double-standard" and the journalistic sources criticisms.

Apart from Maddox’s unsubstantiated contention that "New Left" historians have relied heavily on *The Cold War and Its Origins*...
Origins for their own interpretations, there seems no reason to include this volume at all.

Though Maddox has difficulty in establishing the specific relationship between Fleming and a younger generation of revisionist historians, his assertion that William Appleman Williams has been “by far the most influential American interpreter of the origins of the Cold War” seems accurate. More debatable but still reasonable is Maddox’s additional claim that “much of the existing revisionist, or ‘New Left’ literature on the subject amounts to little more than extended footnotes on interpretations Williams first put forward.” Hence it was hardly surprising that many historians were outraged by Maddox’s final pronouncement on The Tragedy of American Diplomacy: “the ‘tragedy’ is that his book has been taken so seriously by those who ought to have known better.”

How does Maddox arrive at such a devastating judgment? He does so by arguing that Williams failed to offer evidence in support of crucial theses, while in those instances when evidence was forthcoming Williams’ use of it “bore a marked resemblance to those ‘composite photographs’ favored by the more sensational tabloids earlier in the century.” That is, “by weaving into his own prose phrases and sentences gathered from various contexts, he was able to create the appearance of authenticity for his theses where none existed.” Specifically, Maddox contends that Williams was unable “to produce even the scantiest evidence that American policymakers regarded an Open Door in Eastern Europe” in 1945 as the primary issue in Soviet-American relations, and that Williams seriously abused his evidentiary sources in his analysis of the Potsdam Conference, German reparations, the Yalta Conference, the post-war American loan for Soviet reconstruction, the relationship between the atomic bomb and Eastern Europe, and a March 14, 1946 letter from Henry A. Wallace to President Truman. Two allegations—those concerning Eastern Europe and Potsdam—will be considered here.

The notion of the Open Door lies at the heart of Williams’

99 Ibid.
100 Ibid., p. 37.
101 Ibid., pp. 36-37.
102 Ibid., p. 37.
103 Ibid., p. 16.
general interpretation of American foreign policy. In the post-Civil War period American farmers realized that agricultural exports were needed to enlarge their markets and to guarantee their prosperity. With the closing of the continental frontier by 1890, American urban leaders came to share the agrarians' view and adapted it to include industrial, exports. Convinced of the ultimately overwhelming economic might of the United States, American leaders issued the Open Door Notes which were essentially designed to establish and maintain open access and fair competition in the markets of the world by placing the power and influence of the United States publicly and formally on the line in support of the principles of self-determination and equal opportunity.

The Open Door policy worked brilliantly for a half a century, Williams asserts, and an American empire of unprecedented scope was established and maintained. This empire was not the traditional kind, however, for it did not rest upon overseas colonial possessions. Rather, American imperialism was of an "informal" nature, whose strength derived from American economic access to investment in all areas of the globe.

In The Tragedy of American Diplomacy Williams argues that it was the reasonable Soviet response to a systematic effort by the United States to extend the Open Door to Eastern Europe that "crystallized" the Cold War. And it is this contention that Maddox asserts lacks "even the scantiest evidence." Maddox asks, "how could a policy of such transcendent importance have left so few traces in the records"? Because, Maddox argues, Williams contends that since "American leaders had internalized, and had come to believe, the theory... the necessity, and the morality of Open-Door expansion, they seldom thought it necessary to explain or defend the approach." But, if such is the case, why did American policymakers of 1900 frequently refer to the Open Door by name in discussions over Manchuria? For Maddox the answer is clear: where Williams had the facts he used them, and where he could find none he claimed their very absence corroborated his interpretation.  

105 The New Left and the Origins of the Cold War,  p. 18.  
107 Ibid.
The other line of attack centers on Maddox’s claim that “one of the techniques Williams used most often in *Tragedy* was to construct imaginary speeches and dialogues by splicing together phrases uttered at different times and on diverse subjects.” For example, in order to prove his point that Stalin’s goals at the Potsdam Conference were altogether reasonable, Maddox claims that Williams fabricated the following speech by the Soviet leader:

“This council,” Stalin remarked in explaining the Soviet view of the conference at its first general session, “will deal with reparations and give an indication of the day when the Peace Conference should meet.” The primary political issue, he continued, was that of dealing with Germany and its former allies. That was “high policy. The purpose of such a policy was to separate those countries from Germany as a great force. Recurring often to the “many difficulties and sacrifices brought upon Russia by those Axis partners, Stalin argued that the proper strategy was to detach them once and for all from Germany.” As for reparations, Russia would, if necessary “compel such deliveries”

But, Maddox continues,

Stalin made no such speech. His reference on the opening day to “This Council” did not even refer to the Potsdam Conference itself; in context the Russian was making a clarifying statement about Truman’s proposal that a Council of Foreign Ministers be formed. The other phrases Williams quoted were taken from various parts of a discussion held three days later on another American proposal, this one concerning the treatment of Germany’s former allies. Stalin approved the proposal in substance, suggesting only minor changes. And his comment about “compelling reparations deliveries” did not apply to reparations for Russia, as Williams has it, but to Bulgarian reparations for Greece and Yugoslavia, which is quite a different matter.

In fact, as Warren F. Kimball has written, “Williams’ use of *ad seriatim* quotations” constitutes “a method that troubles many historians including some of Williams’ own students.” Is Maddox thereby justified in concluding that *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy* is based upon “pervasive misusages of source materials” and a failure to “produce even the scantiest evidence”
to support other theses? Perhaps, but let us first examine Williams’ defense of the Stalin “speech” and the Open Door in Eastern Europe:

I quoted the heart of that comment by Stalin because I concluded that it revealed (emotionally as well as intellectually) the high priority that Stalin and other Soviet leaders assigned to reparations.

Historians, like literary critics, sociologists, psychiatrists, or anyone else trying to make sense out of reality use seriatim quotations to document, illustrate, and communicate to the reader the substance and texture of the *Weltanschauung* of the protagonists of the way the actors made sense out of reality.

It is essential to perceive and demonstrate the interconnections in their minds between *a* and *v*, or *c* and *z*. If a person uses the idiom of the Open Door Policy (or a blunt discussion of the necessity for economic expansion) in 1927, for example, and then uses it regularly in subsequent years, it is neither mistaken nor misleading to connect the two expressions of the same outlook. On the contrary, it is a vital part of establishing the pervasive nature of the outlook of the individual (or group of individuals).

The mental quality we call literal-mindedness, and the analytical technique we know as the chronological ordering of raw data, have their place, but that place is at the beginning—by no means at the end of historical understanding.

While Maddox’s estimation of Williams’ work may, in the final analysis, be justified, his failure to explore in any depth the peculiar nature of Williams’ historiography represents a serious shortcoming. For Maddox the issue is clear: does Williams tamper with or create the “facts” in order to sustain his interpretation? But by posing the question in this way Maddox vastly oversimplifies a very complex issue by strongly implying that Williams has sinned against a generally recognizable code of historical law. As Williams’ rebuttal makes clear, he rejects an exclusive reliance upon “literal-mindedness” while embracing the notion of *Weltanschauung*. Maddox’s failure to engage Williams on these more philosophical issues makes his critique less than comprehensive.

Indeed, in an era of academic specialization Williams has sought to construct a virtual philosophy of history that seeks to take account of large chunks of time and myriad events and ideas. With the exception of *The Roots of the Modern American Empire*  

Williams' works have been grand excursions into the past and not painstakingly detailed monographs. By identifying those Weltanschauungen which have given meaning and coherence to whole epochs, Williams views historical figures as reflections of ideas who behave with consistency and consciousness in pursuit of a clearly understood goal. Through means such as these Williams muddies neat distinctions between “facts” and “interpretations,” and is led to the kinds of conclusions which Maddox contends are unsupported by “facts.” Perhaps, in any case, Williams writes bad history, but his methodology cannot be assayed without reference to its philosophical roots.116. By ignoring these deeper well-springs Maddox has an easy task measuring Williams' scholarship against some unarticulated canon of historical excellence. But in his zeal to expose Williams' imprecision, Maddox loses sight of Williams' scope.

That The New Left and the Origins of the Cold War may have sprung from a variety of motives (not all of them wholly admirable) seems even more clear when we turn to the chapter on David Horowitz, The Free World Colossus. Admitting that this volume “was all but ignored by professional historians when it first appeared in 1965,” Maddox seeks to defend its inclusion in The New Left by contending that “the book has become a standard work in the growing body of Cold War revisionism.”117 After all, Maddox continues, “. . . its republication attests to its sustained popularity.”118 These arguments notwithstanding, it is extremely difficult to defend the inclusion of The Free World Colossus in the Maddox volume. The American Historical Review and The Journal of American History, the two leading journals of the American historical profession, did not review either the 1965 or the 1971 edition. Of those few respected periodicals that did evaluate it the Times Literary Supplement contended that “even though the bibliography is copious and abounds in reputable names, the reliance which appears to be placed on the works in the text of the book is in inverse proportion to their readability . . . “119 while the Saturday Review argued that “. . . this book must be classified as

116 On the other hand, Williams' refusal to tell his readers that the Stalin “speech” was constructed, for whatever reason, is inexcusable.

117 The New Left, p. 79.

116 Ibid.

a polemic.”120 This review concluded, in words reminiscent of Maddox’s evaluation of Fleming, that “far too frequently the witnesses called in to support an argument are those who have previ-
ously covered the same ground from an identical point of view.” Maddox’s own assessment is remarkably similar:

> In developing his themes, Horowitz left scarcely a canon of histori-
cal scholarship intact. He never used a primary document when a secondary or tertiary source was available, [and] he repeatedly cited the unsupported assertions of others as though they constituted proof for his own assertions. . . .122

His conclusion is likewise unexceptional: “Far from being a piece of ‘serious’ scholarship—or scholarship of any kind—The Free World Colossus is little more than a polemic with footnotes. Indeed, except for the additional examples of shoddy scholarship which Maddox offers, The New Left adds very little to the judgment reached eight years before by the initial reviews. The Free World Colossus is popular history at its worst.

Given these circumstances Maddox’s decision to provide an elaborate critique of the Horowitz volume seems exceedingly strange. Why did he choose to do so? Perhaps Maddox believed that despite the reviews of 1965 The Free World Colossus had nevertheless become a leading example of “New Left” history. In other words, because many of Horowitz’s interpretations are similar to those of other revisionists, it may be the case that these other historians have uncritically accepted (and even employed) those very arguments. This technique, as we noted earlier, was used by Maddox to justify the inclusion of the D. F. Fleming book in The New Left. But if such intellectual debts exist, they remain unacknowledged, because none of the volumes treated by Maddox (four appeared since 1965) cite The Free World Colossus as a source. Another reason is that, perhaps, Maddox regretted the book’s impressive sales as indicated by its republication and by the 1971 Beisner survey124 which testified to the popularity of The Free World Colossus in college curricula. Thus it is plausible that Maddox wished to reiterate the book’s shortcomings. But a third possibility is at least as likely. That is, Horowitz’s work is excoriated

120 November 6, 1965, p. 34.
121 Ibid.
122 The New Left, p. 81.
123 Ibid., p. 101.
124 Supra, Fn. 73.
again because of Maddox’s desire to ‘lump’ together a group of historians to identify with the "New Left," And Horowitz, with his Berkeley and Ramparts background provides Maddox with an extremely inviting target. One wonders whether Maddox, in his zeal to expose polemicists, may come very close to being one himself.

At first blush the insertion of Diane Shaver Clemens, Yalta, in The New Left and the Origins of the Cold War seems much more defensible. This book, which utilizes heretofore unavailable Soviet documents, attempts to transcend “the looming questions of the postwar period . . .: was Yalta a moment of naive appeasement, a sell-out on the one hand—or, on the other, was it the price the United States (and Great Britain) paid for a coalition with Russia?”

Through the use of documents, memoirs, the full minutes of proposals, and available statements of each speaker, Clemens tries to detach this Conference from the Cold War demonology which had distorted its meaning and importance. Yalta, the first book in English on the Conference per se, succeeded, Clemens claims, “in removing the Yalta conference from the context of the cold war. . . .” Here, then, is an original argument presented in a scrupulously researched book which Maddox could have seriously evaluated. “The bulk of Yalta, Maddox writes, ‘is a detailed, at times penetrating analysis of the negotiations carried on there,” and “her comparisons of American and Russian sources are especially noteworthy.” The expectation is that Maddox will engage Clemens on the fascinating issue of the Yalta Conference, but that hope is shattered by his decision to deal with only a small portion of the last chapter of the book—a chapter which deals with Soviet-American relations in the early Truman Administration. It is in this chapter, Maddox asserts, that Clemens abandoned the role of historian for that of prosecutor. Charging that the United States systematically violated those of the Yalta accords most crucial to Russian security, she constructed a brief in which she disregarded the most elementary scholarly procedures. The latter portion of her work, the subject of this essay, provides a sobering example of the excesses to which “commitment” can lead.

Clemens abandoned the role of historian for that of prosecutor.

125 Yalta, p. vii.
126 Ibid.
128 The New Left, p. 125.
129 Ibid.
In defense of Maddox it must be firmly acknowledged that his critique of this chapter, entitled “Second Thoughts and Conclusions,” is frequently telling. In one instance Maddox seems particularly justified in accusing Clemens of a gross misuse of evidence. Here he shows that a letter from John G. Winant, the American Ambassador to Great Britain (and representative to the tripartite German Dismemberment Committee), which Clemens offers as evidence for the United States’ reversal of its position on occupation zones by June 1945, had actually been written on January 4, 1944 on another subject!

The basic question, however, is why Maddox undertakes to expose the weakness of a subsidiary theme instead of confronting the major issue of *Yalta*—an issue which Clemens painstakingly developed over the course of almost 300 pages. Instead of pursuing Clemens’ primary argument, Maddox devotes fourteen pages of *The New Left* to dissect eight pages of *Yalta*. Does Maddox mean to suggest that those eight pages of *Yalta* reflect accurately the general level of scholarship found in this book? Apparently not, because Maddox argues that in these pages “Clemens abandoned the role of historian for that of prosecutor.”130 The obvious implication is that Maddox considers Clemens’ treatment of her materials in the rest of *Yalta* to be unassailable on methodological grounds. The real reason for Maddox’s odd approach is probably related to his contention that these pages provide “a sobering example of the excesses to which ‘commitment’ can lead.”131 Although Maddox fails to elaborate on this tantalizing suggestion, the inference seems to be that Clemens’ adherence to some unspecified cause or ideology (the “New Left”?) induced her to ignore “the most elementary scholarly procedures” in these few pages in a zealous, though misguided, attempt to indict the Truman Administration. By grounding his case against Clemens on insinuation, Maddox largely fails to provide us with any deep understanding of this important and original book.

Although a number of volatile issues such as the delayed opening of the Second Front, the nature of the Yalta accords, and the Soviet capture of Berlin have fueled both scholarly and popular debates on the origins of the Cold War for thirty years, a truly

130 Ibid.
131 Ibid.
incendiary question concerns the dropping of the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Until the mid-1960s the prevailing American view held that the decision to use atomic weapons against Japan had been taken to shorten the war and to save American lives. According to this interpretation, once the requisite technology had been mastered by the scientists of the Manhattan Project, there had never been any doubt in Washington that the bomb would be used to help end the war. The works of Herbert Feis most articulately typify this “orthodox” view.

But Gar Alperovitz in *Atomic Diplomacy: Hiroshima and Potsdam* argued forcefully that President Truman’s employment of atomic weapons was primarily the results of a political decision to strengthen the American position in Eastern Europe during the summer of 1945. Alperovitz asserted that the atomic bomb became part of an elaborate American strategy of diplomatic delay after Truman discovered that the United States lacked sufficient economic and military power to control events in Eastern Europe. Yet the Russians refused to be cowed by this “terrible new weapon” and successfully withstood American pressure at the London Foreign Ministers Conference in September, 1945.

The ensuing debate between Feis and Alperovitz, as indicated earlier, was spirited and partisan, but still essentially scholarly. The exchanges between Maddox and Alperovitz, however, after Maddox published his critique of *Atomic Diplomacy* in *The Journal of American History*, was anything but cautious. A slightly revised version of that article appeared soon thereafter as a chapter in *The New Left and the Origins of the Cold War*. Maddox begins by claiming that *Atomic Diplomacy* “has become a staple of New Left historiography,” but unfortunately he does not specify the meaning of “staple.” This omission is important, because several revisionists have rejected Alperovitz’s contention that Truman reversed Roosevelt’s policy of cooperation with the Soviets. But to Maddox’s credit, in contrast to his treatment of *Yalta*, he proceeds to confront squarely the primary thesis of *Atomic Diplomacy* and concludes “that orthodox historians have not responded more vigorously to revisionism as exemplified by *Atomic Diplomacy* is surprising, for an examination of the sources upon which it is based reveals that the book is unable to withstand scrutiny.” To prove his case Maddox presents an impressive catalogue of at least six

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132 Ibid., p. 63.
allegedly unsavory practices totaling eighteen examples. The very first instance that he cites is taken from the opening paragraph of the Alperovitz volume:

Only eleven days had passed since the death of Franklin Delano Roosevelt. The new President of the United States prepared for his first meeting with a representative of the Soviet Union. Rehearsing his views on the subject of the negotiation—a reorganization of the Polish government—Truman declared that if the Russians did not care to cooperate, "they could go to hell..."

Maddox argues that,

The quotation, from Charles E. Bohlen’s notes of the conversation, is cited correctly, but applied to the wrong issue. In context Truman was referring to the possibility that the Russians might boycott the founding conference of the United Nations if they did not get their way on Poland. "He intended to go on with the plans for San Francisco," Bohlen reported him as saying, "and if the Russians did not wish to join [they] could go to hell..." Alperovitz’s version helps to establish Truman’s intransigency on the Polish question, but it is incorrect.

In response to this charge Alperovitz wrote that,

The article [on which the chapter under discussion was based] takes me to task for my use of a quotation in which Truman declared that "if the Russians did not care to cooperate ‘they could go to hell’..." I wrote that the basic subject of the negotiations was a fight over the reorganization of the Polish government. Maddox charges that Truman’s statement refers "to other subjects altogether"—by which he seems to mean only whether the Russians might boycott the United Nations founding conference. I say ‘seems to mean’ because in the next sentences Maddox acknowledges that the possibility of a Russian boycott of the conference came up precisely because of the dispute over the Polish situation.

Alperovitz then listed the flaws in Maddox’s approach:

1. an apparent inability to see the integral relationship between one event and another in the way the historic actors understood the relationship; 2. a seeming indifference to the fact that his own article refutes his assertions (to the extent—as in acknowledging that the Polish negotiations were intimately related to the U.N. issue—that he reports the most basic historic facts); and, finally,

135 “Communication to the Editor,” p. 1064. Emphasis in the original.
For Alperovitz, . . . the issue for serious historians is the meaning of Truman’s tactical decision (in this and other instances)—an issue which repeatedly evades Mr. Maddox as he picks out secondary pieces of evidence for exaggerated, microscopic (but somehow analytically isolated), scrutiny. 136

Largely echoing Alperovitz, Warren F. Kimball continued the debate in the following manner:

Maddox claims that “one of the most common flaws in the book is Alperovitz’s practice of citing statements in support of his arguments which, in context, refer to other subjects altogether,” Truman’s statement that the Russians “could go to hell,” associated by Alperovitz with the president’s views on the question of the reorganization of the Polish government, refers, according to Maddox, to the question of boycotting the San Francisco conference. Since Maddox follows by agreeing that Truman understood the Russians might boycott the conference if they did not get their way on the Polish question, Maddox seemingly contradicts himself. 137

Finally, Maddox in rebuttal concluded that . . . Alperovitz does not merely ‘associate’ the ‘go to hell’ statement with the reorganization of the Polish government, he uses it to authenticate Truman’s complete intransigence on the subject. Kimball says that “according to Maddox” the statement was made in the context of boycotting the San Francisco Conference, as though this were merely an ‘assertion on my part.’ “He intended to go on with the plans for San Francisco,” according to the Bohlen notes, “and if the Russians did not wish to join us they could go to hell.” Truman’s remark, therefore, was made in a specific context and referred to a specific contingency. Alperovitz transformed it into something rather different. 138

What are we to make of this puzzling, and in some ways, depressing series of exchanges? Actually, it must be acknowledged that not all of the eighteen examples of substandard scholarship in Atomic Diplomacy alleged by Maddox are as problematic as the one under review here. For instance, in regard to the discussions

136 Ibid.
137 Ibid., pp. 1064-5. Emphasis in the original.
within the Truman Administration about Lend-Lease curtailments to Russia during the spring of 1945, Maddox shows that Alperovitz refers to a phrase by General John R. Deane that had actually been uttered in December, 1944. But the case at hand seems much less clear-cut. Does Alperovitz quote Bohlen out of context or does Maddox neglect to take Alperovitz's context into account? Is there a significant distinction between “associate” and “authenticate”? After closely studying these statements by Maddox, Alperovitz, and Kimball one cannot help but feel like an observer at some surrealistic spectacle.

Happily, however, the debate about the atomic bomb has since moved off dead center. The Feis-Alperovitz duels of the 1960s (with Maddox and Kimball acting as seconds in the early 1970s) shows signs of abating. In 1975 Martin J. Sherwin, *A World Destroyed*, was published and the effect was to raise this controversy to “a new level of courtesy, nuance, and scrupulous documentation.” By focusing on the relations between Washington and the scientists of the Manhattan Project, Sherwin uncovered a new and crucial dimension of this issue and refused to put “... all the blame on the Americans or the Russians—a gross simplification of the original [i.e., Cold War origins] controversy that threatened to engulf the historiography of the Cold War.” In sum, an infusion into the Cold War literature of “post-revisionist” works like *A World Destroyed* has helped to transcend what was becoming an increasingly sterile and, even petty, debate.

The remaining revisionist works analyzed by Robert Maddox are Gabriel Kolko, *The Politics of War* and Lloyd C. Gardner, *Architects of Illusion*. Unlike several of the other volumes discussed in *The New Left and the Origins of the Cold War* both of these books have been generally well-received by the American historical community. Because of this fact and because Kolko and Gardner responded to *The New Left* by circulating extremely detailed rebuttals within the historical profession, it seems unnecessary to evaluate Maddox’s treatment of both works. But inasmuch as Maddox calls *Architects of Illusion* “the most sophisticated and

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140 The New Left, p. 67.
143 Ibid.
convincing account of how the war began yet written from the New Left point of view, we shall focus on this volume. Unlike many of its revisionist predecessors Gardner’s work is “wholly lacking in stridency” and “is persuasively argued and extremely well-written.” But no matter, for “it is also, one must add, a compendium of myths invented by earlier revisionist writers, and it contains as well an impressive number developed by Gardner himself.”

Maddox commences this twenty-page chapter with an extended description of Gardner’s primary thesis that “American policymakers during World War II . . . were convinced that the nation’s domestic well-being following the conflict would depend upon the existence of a liberal world order based on multilateral trade and investment (Williams’s ‘Open Door’).” But, Maddox asserts

The basic weakness of Architects of Illusion is Gardner’s inability to provide any real evidence that the men charged with the conduct of American diplomacy acted out of the motives and assumptions he attributed to them. If, for instance, American policies toward Eastern Europe were dictated by the fear of depression and a shift to the left (even accepting Gardner’s qualification that Eastern Europe was seen as but part of a larger struggle), one would expect to find those who made policy discussing the issues in such a related way with each other if not publicly. Gardner was unable to show that any such discussion ever took place. His efforts to deflect attention from this most crucial gap in his argument were ingenious, but they cannot withstand analysis.

From this starting point Maddox proceeds to catalogue about twenty examples of “irrelevant evidence, misused quotations, jumbled figures, and distortions of documentary materials” and concludes that “Architects of Illusion is a fitting title for a book that is in many ways itself based on illusion.”

Although Maddox has written elsewhere that “my case stands or falls on the cumulative impact of such procedures,” space considerations dictate that we deal with only one of his examples, but it is an example that Maddox claims is “representative.” The New

144 The New Left, p. 139.
145 Ibid.
146 Ibid.
147 Ibid.
148 Ibid., p. 142.
149 Ibid., p. 158.
Left and the Origins of the Cold War charges that Gardner erred when he wrote

that when Secretary of State Byrnes told Truman that the atomic bomb ‘might well put us in a position to dictate our own terms at the end of the war,’ he was referring to relations with Russia. Gardner’s source for this quotation, Truman’s Memoirs, permits no doubt that Byrnes’s remark was made in the context of dictating terms to Japan, not to Russia.151

Gardner replied in the following manner:

Maddox’s presentation of the accusation proves we are, after all, human. First, Byrnes was not Secretary of State when this statement was made, Stettinius was. Second, that interpretation of Byrnes’ remark is perfectly justified, given Byrnes’ documented statements on other occasions, the context of the discussion, and Truman’s quotation of Byrnes not on one point, but on two in the same paragraph:

Byrnes had already told me that the weapon might be so powerful as to be potentially capable of wiping out entire cities and killing people on an unprecedented scale. And he had added that in his belief the bomb might well put us in a position to dictate our own terms at the end of the war. (Truman, I, Signet edition, p. 104)152

And here is the immediately preceding sentence in Architects of Illusion which neither Maddox nor Gardner cited: ‘Where Stimson only hoped there might be some way to get ‘less barbarous’ relations with Stalin, Byrnes seemed convinced of it.’153 Finally, let us be persistent and look at the full paragraphs in Truman’s Memoirs:

I listened with absorbed interest, for Stimson was a man of great wisdom and foresight. He went into considerable detail in describing the nature and the power of the projected weapon. If expectations were to be realized, he told me, the atomic bomb would be certain to have a decisive influence on our relations with other countries. And if it worked, the bomb, in all probability, would shorten the war.

Byrnes had already told me that the weapon might be so powerful as to be potentially capable of wiping out entire cities and killing people on an unprecedented scale. And he had added that

151 The New Left, p. 147. Emphasis added.
in his belief the bomb might well put us in a position to dictate our own terms at the end of the war.

Stimson, on the other hand, seemed at least as much concerned with the role of the atomic bomb in the shaping of history as in its capacity to shorten this war. As yet, of course, no one could positively know that the gigantic effort that was being made would be successful. Nevertheless, the Secretary appeared confident of the outcome and told me that in all probability success would be attained within the next few months. He also suggested that I designate a committee to study and advise me of the implications of this new force.

On the basis of these paragraphs alone, it seems that although Secretary of War Stimson was at least as concerned with the broader diplomatic consequences of the atomic bomb (including relations with Russia) as with its immediate impact on Japan, Truman appears to say that, in contrast, Byrnes was primarily interested in the bomb’s ability to end the war. But Truman does not state that Byrnes was oblivious to the bomb’s political implications. Rather, he infers that Stimson was more interested in this dimension than was Byrnes. The conclusion is that neither Maddox nor Gardner are completely correct on this matter. The sentence of Gardner’s not cited by Maddox (i.e., “Where Stimson had only hoped there might be some way to get ‘less barbarous’ relations with Stalin, Byrnes seemed convinced of it”) does not seem to be supported by the Truman paragraphs. To reiterate, Stimson was, if anything, more concerned than was Byrnes with the diplomatic ramifications of this weapon. But Maddox is not justified in claiming that there can be “no doubt” that Byrnes was referring to Japan in the sentence quoted in The New Left. On the basis of these paragraphs from the Memoirs it is impossible to be sure whether Byrnes’s reference is to Japan or to Russia or to a combination of both. In short, these passages are fraught with more ambiguity than either Maddox or Gardner is willing to admit.

156 Another factor to consider is the “unconditional surrender” doctrine. If the “Big Three” were in agreement that Japan must ultimately surrender unconditionally in any case (bomb or not) what could Byrnes have meant by his statement that the bomb might well put us in a position to dictate our own terms at the end of the war? To dictate terms to a Japan which had unconditionally surrendered would seem superfluous.
There are several interesting and not altogether frivolous parallels between the Watergate investigations and the investigations of "scandal" undertaken by Robert James Maddox in *The New Left and the Origins of the Cold War*. Aside from the coincidental fact that the Maddox book was published at almost the exact instant that the Ervin Committee commenced its hearings, the allegations levelled against President Nixon and his closest advisers are similar, in many respects, to those alleged by Maddox against the historians of the "New Left." Ultimately a number of investigatory bodies charged that Nixon, Haldeman, Erlichman, Mitchell and others had conspired to limit lawful inquiry into the burglary of the Democratic National Headquarters on June 17, 1972 and to bribe some of those directly involved in the break-in. As these investigations proceeded some critics claimed that Nixon had "covered-up" his real activities by tampering with evidence (i.e., the White House tapes) and by releasing heavily edited versions of documentary proof. Finally, however, after the Supreme Court ruled that the "smoking pistol" tape of June 23, 1973 had to be released, public and Congressional outrage became so powerful that Nixon was forced to resign the Presidency.

For his part, Robert Maddox accuses seven noted revisionist historians of seeking to support their interpretations of Cold War origins through "pervasive misusages of the source materials" which they cite. In addition, Maddox charges that those segments of the historical community who ought to have exposed these scandalous practices (i.e., publishers, reviewers, and expert readers) largely failed to do so. Finally, *The New Left* infers that although this group of revisionists has been professionally rewarded for their work, the "New Left" case can probably only be "sustained by doing violence to the historical record." Yet despite the gravity of these charges and the furor which they created, the reputation of those attacked by Maddox do not seem to have been noticeably altered in the four years since the book's appearance. Why was the outcome of this academic "Watergate" so different from its more famous Washington counterpart?

The most obvious and probably most accurate answer is that Maddox's case is significantly weaker than was that of either the Special Prosecutor or the House Judiciary Committee. As was suggested earlier, despite the sweeping and seductive title of his book,
Maddox provides no substantive links that tie these seven scholars together. He alleges, but does not prove, that these authors agree that “the historian’s job . . . is to create a version of the past which can be used to help achieve the goals his ideological preferences dictate.” To support his thesis Maddox refers to David Horowitz’s claim that orthodox scholars have consciously promoted “the State Department line”; to William Appleman Williams’ charge that orthodox historians define “history as a stockpile of facts to be requisitioned on the basis of what is needed to prove a conclusion decided upon in advance;” and to Diane Shaver Clemens’ “commitment.” And to clinch his case Maddox infers that all of these scholars, save Fleming, are critics “of the American system as such.” But as we have tried to demonstrate, nowhere does Maddox offer a systematic definition of “New Left” history, nor does he give any indication of the manner in which these historians have influenced each other. In short, we must accept on faith Maddox’s contention that he has succeeded in identifying the ‘New Left’ and its history.

Serious as this puzzling omission is, its consequences create even deeper difficulties, for this ambiguous label encourages Maddox not only to group indiscriminately together six of these historians but to dismiss their work with nearly identical phrases despite vast differences in the quality of their scholarship. The effect of this technique is to reduce all of these books to a lowest common denominator of incompetence (or worse). In response to this kind of criticism, Maddox admits that the “New Left” revisionists are “by no means monolithic in their interpretations.” Yet like his “soft-hard” distinction Maddox offers no further elaboration of this point. Indeed, the strident tone of *The New Left* encourages the reader to forget Maddox’s preliminary disclaimers and provisos.

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158. In a very perceptive passage Geoffrey S. Smith recently wrote that “Revisionist historiography is in fact characterized by disagreement and conflict between (and among) neo-Marxists, left-liberals, right-liberals, and other groups. Old labels and categories, therefore, retain little utility in classifying interpretations, and more than ever historians need to assess new books in individual terms.” “Harry, We Hardly Know You: Revisionism, Politics and Diplomacy, 1945-1954,” *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. LXX, No. 2 (June 1976), p. 564. As we have suggested, such labels and categories can be equally misleading when applied to earlier revisionist works.
159. *The New Left*, p. 3.
In a real sense Maddox attempts to create a "smoking pistol" of joint culpability by insinuating that the political "commitment" of these authors has led them to pervert their scholarship. Lacking proof that they conspired even indirectly to hoodwink their colleagues and the public, Maddox tries to involve these scholars in a dark plot to sustain their theses through lies. And he provides them with the missing link—the "smoking pistol": a "New Left" yearning to overthrow the existing political order by a "footnote" revolution. If Maddox had been fully sincere in his program to uncover scandal in high places he ought to have concentrated his efforts on the works of Kolko and Gardner. There was really no reason at all to rehash criticisms of Fleming and Horowitz or to attack eight pages of Yalta. And to assault Williams in the absence of an appreciation of his philosophy of history is to render this revisionist a serious disservice.

If these questionable tactics to infer a conspiracy are put aside, does The New Left succeed in proving its two primary substantive charges? On balance, the answer must be no. To sustain his first accusation—that "New Left" history is distinguished by "pervasive misusages of the source materials"—Maddox applies "a very simple test" to "seven of the most prominent New Left works offering interpretations of the Cold War's origins" by comparing "the evidence as presented by the revisionists with the sources from which the evidence was taken." The problem with this test is that it is not so simple as Maddox believes. To be a "simple test" there would have to be a relatively easy way to separate a documentary fact from a personal interpretation: does this fact yield this interpretation? But it should be clear from our extended analyses of the Alperovitz and Gardner examples that it is sometimes extremely difficult to answer this question in a confident manner. Beyond this conundrum there lies an argument about the notion of history itself. At what point, if any, in the process of writing history, does an "imaginative leap" occur which supplements a "literalmindedness" with something more? Far from dealing with these thorny questions, Maddox fails to even acknowledge their existence. To return briefly to the Watergate analogy: the accusation that Richard Nixon had conspired to obstruct justice and to suppress evidence was relatively difficult to prove despite the assistance provided by elaborate federal criminal statutes. In the absence of comparably specific or accepted

160 The New Left, p. 10.
canons of historical scholarship, it is little wonder that Maddox enters murky waters when he applies this "simple test." That he senses some problems in this regard may account for Maddox’s quiet insertion of two additional criteria to judge the validity of the "New Left" case: the reasonableness of its interpretations and the sufficiency of the evidence offered to sustain an argument. In response to Warren Kimball’s charge that The New Left deals primarily with interpretations, Maddox argues the following:

Kimball is free to argue against this and does so in his paper. But in addition he writes as though I somewhere made a pledge to avoid all questions of interpretations. But I made no such statement, and felt free to discuss interpretations whenever it seemed appropriate.

Actually, however, Maddox did take an implied pledge to deal exclusively with matters of "fact." For him to ground his entire case on a "simple test" to discover the facts, and then to evaluate interpretations (without so informing the reader) is misleading. Finally, in several places Maddox argues that revisionist historians had failed to demonstrate convincingly to sustain a thesis. These criticisms may be reasonable but they rest on different ground from the "simple test that Maddox argues the New Left fails to pass. In short, Maddox retreats to other "tests" when his "simple" one proves problematic without indicating that he is shifting the basis of his critique.

There are two related difficulties. With very few exceptions Maddox does not specify whether the examples of poor scholarship which he cites reflect the overall quality of the books or whether they are the most flagrant instances of "pervasive misusages." If Maddox had dealt exclusively with, say, The Politics of War and Architects Of Illusion, he could have painstakingly subjected these entire books to his investigations. But Maddox cannot possibly deal comprehensively with these seven volumes within a study as brief as The New Left. It is true that Maddox does succeed in uncovering a number of glaring discrepancies between revisionist interpretations and the documentary evidence. He usually fails, however, to indicate the relative importance of these "errors" to the central

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162 The New Left, p. 142.
163 Ibid., p. 16.
thesis of the book he evaluates. Are they crucial or merely peripheral? To what degree do they affect these books' overall credibility? Maddox does not say, but his silence on this issue encourages the reader to assume (often mistakenly) that all of Maddox's examples are of equally weighty significance. Finally, Maddox's failure to apply explicitly his test to "orthodox" historians of the origins of the Cold War, while implying that the "New Left" case can only be supported by scandalous practices, is very unfortunate, for it encourages the reader to assume that only orthodox history is correct history. We are left to wonder if Maddox's literal-minded approach to history might "devastate" orthodox interpreters (or even his own argument) as well.

What, then, of Maddox's second controversial accusation? Does The New Left and the Origins of the Cold War offer substantive evidence that publishers and expert reviewers have for a variety of low motives chosen to remain silent about the disreputable procedures employed by "New Left" historians? In fact, as was suggested earlier, several reviewers had questioned some of the methodological practices of the Fleming, Williams, and Horowitz volumes when they first appeared in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Maddox largely ignores these evaluations, but, rather, attempts to strengthen his argument by asserting that certain unnamed leading scholars in the field of diplomatic history had tried to discourage the publication of The New Left and the Origins of the Cold War on the ground that no book "ought to call attention to the possibility" of compromised scholarly obligations. But upon examination of additional evidence which came to the attention of this reviewer, this part of Maddox's case becomes much weaker.

In a paper circulated within the historical profession John J. Rumbarger, former editor of the AHA Newsletter, contends that Maddox's entire discussion of all his negative critics (pp. 161-163) is based upon two letters of rejection he received from me as editor of the AHA Newsletter in August and October 1971. Despite the fact "that the Newsletter is not a scholarly journal" and "Maddox knew this," the essay was nevertheless submitted. According to Rumbarger

... what cannot be dismissed or ignored is his failure to report the real reason for the rejection of his first submission to the Newsletter.

164 Ibid., p. 16.
165 The New Left, p. 162. See supra, Part III.
letter as it was reported to him. I wrote to Maddox at the end of August, 1971 that the critic to whom I had forwarded his manuscript (which turns out to have been virtually his entire chapter on Gabriel Kolko’s *The Politics of War*) thought that although some parts were of interest and ‘certainly worth airing,’ much of what you had to say ‘is on a quibbling basis.’ I also told Maddox that this reader (and I) thought you guilty of much of what you ascribe to Kolko in attempting to generalize from *The Politics of War* to all revisionist interpretations. Finally I told him the reader considered ‘the whole piece quarrelsome and intemperate.’

Rumbarger then recounts that since this first reader was interested in Kolko’s representation of the military phase of the last months of World War II, he invited Maddox to submit a revised draft which concentrated on this issue and possessed a more moderate tone. Such a revision was quickly received by Rumbarger and sent to a second reader who argued that ‘the problem of Kolko’s assumptions was of greater critical importance than the question of whether he was correct on his troop movements.’ But Maddox dropped this crucial and quite precise reference and substituted for it “the material contained in this essay.” In short, Rumbarger writes,

... Maddox has created a body of general critics of ‘this type of work’ by ignoring the criticism of one who had unknowingly read one of his chapters and by distorting the critical reactions of a historian who was evaluating Maddox handling of a much narrower topic: Kolko’s handling of the last phases of World War II combat. It is this ‘group,’ he charges, which is unconcerned about factual accuracy.

As for the second group of critics—those who were concerned with “the matter of taste”—Rumbarger argues that

The quotes that buttress this description spring from the same roots as the others: my two letters of rejection. In excerpting them Maddox’ own creative touch is once again evident. I never ‘expressed reservations over the propriety of publishing’ either of Maddox’ efforts. Nor did I suggest that he rewrite them so that alleged numerous errors would appear “as . . . random howlers.” This has got nothing to do with matters of taste, but with the laws of libel and defamation.

167 Ibid., p. 3.
168 Ibid., p. 4.
169 The New Left, p. 162.
170 “Robert J. Maddox and the Use of Evidence,” p. 5.
171 Ibid.
Is this the sole basis of Maddox’s charge that ‘scholars, students, and lay readers alike have been poorly served by what can only be regarded as a striking malfunctioning of the critical mechanisms within the historical profession’? Apparently there is much more to Maddox’s accusations for he asserts the following:

1 used these readers’ reports from the AHA Newsletter because they stated the case most openly—many of the comments I received directly said so in euphemistic terms. Because Mr. Rumbarger could not possibly know what comments and/or reader’s reports I received from sources other than the Newsletter, any statement of his about what my argument was “solely based” on is necessarily uninformed. If he alleges that I misquoted from the reports, I am prepared to produce my copies.

But this rejoinder is clearly insufficient, because Maddox asks us to accept on faith his contention that unreleased readers’ reports couched in ‘euphemistic terms’ will support an argument otherwise undermined by Rumbarger’s revelations. Indeed, maybe others would interpret these reports in a manner quite different than Maddox. In the absence of such evidence, however, it is difficult to accept Maddox’s thesis that members of the historical profession shunned their responsibility to seek out the truth regardless of the political consequences. Far from constituting an historians’ ‘Watergate,’ a careful reading of The New Left and the Origins of the Cold War yields a surfeit of innuendo and a paucity of hard evidence.

In retrospect, the publication of The New Left and the vitriolic exchanges which it prompted marked the culmination of an increasingly rancorous debate about the origins of the Cold War. Fueled by the Vietnam War the tenor of this controversy became more shrill and less illuminating. Perhaps the very appearance of the Maddox volume with its brittle literal-mindedness was one indication that the substantive arguments had been exhausted. Anger had come to outdistance insight, and a once creative dialogue had been threatened with the sterility that had finally characterized the revisionist-orthodox clash of the interwar years.

Fortunately, at about this time, a series of books by “second generation” revisionist and orthodox historians began to resuscitate this moribund debate. These contributions proved to be much more

172 The New Left, p. 160.
subtle and balanced than either *The New Left* or most of the works it criticized. Most prominent were John Lewis Gaddis, *The United States and the Origins of the Cold War, 1941-1947* 174 and Martin Sherwin, *A World Destroyed*, 175 although others also contributed.176 The Gaddis book best reflects, perhaps, this new-found flexibility and reasonableness, and it was applauded by D. F. Fleming, who called it “an excellent addition to the history of the Cold War.” 177 Equally admiring was Charles S. Maier: “In the most satisfactory post-revisionist treatment of American policy-making to date [Gaddis] has assimilated some of the specific revisionist criticisms even while rejecting the frame of economic causality in which they are often presented.” 178 Because the Maddox volume had so polarized the American historical profession, it is little wonder that these analyses have been welcomed with relief which has bordered on joy.

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175 See supra, fn. 142.