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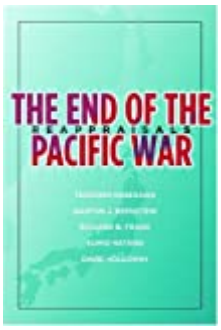

Tsuyoshi Hasegawa. *The End of the Pacific War: Reappraisals.* Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2007. xvi + 331 pp. $60.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-8047-5427-9.

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Debate Continued

The premise of this collection of essays is that despite the passing of six decades, the ending of the Second World War is not well understood. The mushroom clouds rising over the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945 signified the deaths of thousands of people and obscured the machinations that resulted in the termination of the war. Political and societal sensitivities over the decision by U.S. President Harry S. Truman to drop "the bomb" subsequently constrained analysis and stifled debate. While significant advances in the historiography have been made in recent years, there is plenty of room for the essayists to push the debate further, primarily through the use of Japanese- and Russian-language sources.

The atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki by U.S. B-29 bombers played some part in the decision by Japan's rulers to end the war. The question is how big a part? For many observers, including those fighting the war, the bomb was the most obvious factor. Indeed, to the layperson, it was feasible that this startling new weapon could have frightened the enemy into surrendering. In his contribution to this collection, Richard B. Frank remarks on the "patriotic orthodoxy" that took hold: "With few exceptions, Americans in 1945 believed fervently that the use of atomic weapons at Hiroshima and Nagasaki ended the Pacific War and saved countless lives. That conviction dominated national discourse for approximately two decades" (p. 65). A further issue is that use of the atomic bomb generated a rift between the bomber and the bombed. Editor and essayist Tsuyoshi Hasegawa (who was educated in both Japan and the United States) observes: "The Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings clearly divide American and Japanese public opinion. While many Americans believe that they led directly to Japan's decision to surrender, a majority of Japanese feel a sense of victimization" (p. 1).

There is nothing inherently incorrect with the contributors' statements already noted, but it would be remiss of this non-Japanese/non-American reviewer to not pass comment on the perspectives offered as justification for the book. The patriotic orthodoxy mentioned by Frank incorporates a sense of U.S.-Japanese histori-

cal ownership of the war's end. For the most part, the historians in this book are content to accept this. When Hasegawa states that "we have still not come to terms with its [the war's end] consequences," what he means is that Americans and Japanese have not (p. 1). This is not sufficient. The Second World War was a global event and its end was celebrated worldwide. While the decision to drop the bomb was an American one, it was also an *Allied* one. Commemorative services and "anti-nuke" protests that accompany the anniversaries of the bombings occur around the world, as befits an action that had ramifications for the whole of humanity. Even though most of the key studies have emerged from the United States and, to a lesser extent, Japan (reflecting their central positions in the event and their particular sensitivities), the issue is of interest and is debated across many countries. Having interviewed a fair number of Australian veterans, I have met only a few whose opinion did not conform to the patriotic orthodoxy; it suggests there is a wider, albeit U.S.-generated orthodoxy to consider.

Of course, the contributors realize the global impact of the war and the reach of the debate. After all, much of the book explores the implications of the Soviet Union's entry into the war. Hasegawa also raises the issue of sensitivities concerning remembrance of the war among Japan's regional neighbors. On the whole, however, the tone implies that the war's end is first and foremost a U.S.-Japanese concern. (It is probably not coincidental that the contributor who best conveys the wider significance is Irish-born and British-educated David Holloway.) Of course, a particular national perspective is not uncommon in publishing; nonetheless, it is a shame that in a book published for a worldwide academic audience, the editor and contributors, for the most part, were unable to embrace a worldview when introducing their essays. Fortunately, they are not so confined in the guts of the essays that cover the necessary ground.

Putting aside this quibble over language and perspective, this is an important and well-produced collection of essays. All of the contributions are informative and engaging. Of course, there will not (and should not) be agreement on interpretation, as indeed there is not among the contributors. Yet the book achieves the objective of presenting fresh ideas and promoting debate. It is also exceptionally well edited; I came across only one obvious typographical error.

Barton J. Bernstein kicks off with an excellent overview and critical discussion of the literature since 1945. He meets the challenge of incorporating fairly his own contributions. In exploring the sixty-year-old debate, which nowadays seems to polarize between "revisionists" and "non-revisionists," Bernstein makes two compelling claims. First, although translated documents and interviews formed the basis of some early studies, few scholars and writers have drawn on other non-English language sources; next, academic scholars have tended to separate U.S. atomic bomb policy and Japanese end-of-the-war policy. Only Leon Sigal's *Fighting to a Finish: The Politics of War Termination in the United States and Japan, 1945* (1988) and Hasegawa's *Racing the Enemy: Stalin, Truman and the Surrender of Japan* (2005) have endeavored to merge these issues. Bernstein makes it clear that with orthodoxy prevailing, here is a historical event with ample grounds for reinterpretation.

Frank offers a masterful assessment of Japanese political and military strategy in 1945. Within that, he incorporates U.S. planning for landings on the Japanese mainland. Coming from the non-revisionist camp, his is a well-positioned (in terms of placement in the book) and convincing argument that both sides had reason to fear an invasion. Both sides anticipated heavy military and civilian casualties before an Allied victory. One of the "patriotic orthodox" justifications for dropping the atomic bombs is that it saved more lives than were lost at Hiroshima and Nagasaki. It is probably correct to state that a landing in Japan would have resulted in far greater casualties, although the difficulty with the traditional argument is that the Soviet Union's entry into the war was factored in. Bernstein suggests what may have been possible in the event of a U.S. landing, and why it was necessary militarily for Truman to consider and order unleashing the bomb.

Sumio Hatano and Hasegawa offer essays on the atomic bomb as a factor in Japan's decision to surrender in August 1945. Hatano's take is that the surrender was the result of dual *gaiastu* (external pressure) with both the atomic bomb and Soviet entry into the war being significant. For the Japanese Army, however, the Soviet entry was more important because it convinced senior generals that militarily the war could not be sustained, and it was necessary to surrender to preserve the emperor's rule and the homeland. Hasegawa, whose *Racing the Enemy* met with mixed reviews, looks more deeply at the Japanese government and military decision making after the Allies' Potsdam declaration. He continues to challenge suggestions that the atomic bomb was the pivotal factor in Japan's surrender in August 1945, declaring that "there is no evidence to show that the Hiroshima bomb led either Togo or the emperor to accept the Potsdam

terms" (p. 144). However, he concedes that the bomb may have tipped the scale toward surrender–after which the Soviet entry into the war added "to that tipped scale, then completely toppled the scale itself" (p. 144).

One of the strengths of this book is sources. Frank, Hatano, and Hasegawa all make excellent use of Japanese-language sources, especially memoirs. However, there is also an inherent weakness of which all of the contributors are aware but which no historian at this point can do anything about. There remains limited access to some key archival collections in Russia and Japan–especially the papers of Joseph Stalin and Hirohito. While Japanese leaders' obsession with not deepening the nation's shame has relaxed, and some institutions, such as the National Defense Studies Institute in Tokyo, have permitted greater access to their holdings, there is no indication of any imminent release of the remaining secreted documents in that country. In Russia, the Soviet-inspired proclivity for secrecy seems to have been reasserted in recent years. Thus, an underlying theme of the book is that historians are pushing the boundaries as far as practical, but restricted access to archives prevents any decisive study at this time.

This understanding of the constraints imposed is evident in Holloway's and Hasegawa's essays on Soviet entry into the war. As Holloway states, access to Russian archives is restricted–and, in some cases, blocked. Holloway has made use of three sets of documents published in Russia on the Soviet-Japanese war, on Soviet-Chinese relations from 1937-45, and on the Soviet atomic project, 1938-54. Aware of the limitations as well as the possibilities of working from published collections, Holloway reworks and offers insight into the machinations of the Soviet leadership, including Soviet reception of peace overtures from Japan and Stalin's decision to enter the war. As the title of his essay makes clear, Holloway believes Stalin was motivated by his jockeying for position in the postwar world. Hasegawa views the Soviet entry differently, as part of a U.S.-Soviet race for power in Europe and the Far East. Both agree that whether or not the Soviet entry into the war was militarily necessary, it did strengthen the Soviet Union's position–although not as much as Stalin hoped, since Japan elected to surrender sooner than he hoped and dropping the atomic bombs demonstrated that postwar international politics had been transformed by a weapon the Soviet Union did not yet possess.

Seemingly missing from the book is any notable reappraisal of U.S. or British policy in the critical period up to August 1945. Aspects of U.S. policy are discussed in some of the essays, especially Frank's and Hasegawa's final one, while British policy is raised by Holloway. But, the book would have benefited from a specific essay on U.S. and perhaps British policy. It seems odd that the key player in dropping the bomb did not warrant a standalone essay or two. The suggestion seems to be that we have covered all possible ground in U.S. and British archives, and must now seek to make fuller use of Japanese and Russian sources and perspectives. There is no disputing the possibilities, but without a specific U.S. perspective the book offers not so much reappraisal as fresh avenues.