

Andre Ye

Dr. Reagan

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In “The Experiences of my Family in the Atomic Bombing”, Sachiko Yasui reflects upon her experience as a child during the Nagasaki atomic bombing. She illustrates not only the immediate death, but also the slower destruction that occurred in the bombing’s aftermath through disease and lack of resources. From these experiences, Yasui argues for a more peaceful existence of humankind, one without nuclear weapons.

In Ch.1 of *American Empire*, Andrew Bacevich details the work of two historians in combatting the “myth of the reluctant superpower” - that American foreign policy was always a noble response to external factors and not of domestic ones. Charles A. Beard argued all foreign policy was derived from domestic policy, and that leaders often chose foreign intervention to avoid addressing domestic difficulties. Building upon these ideas, William A. Williams further argued that US interventionism, as an empire, always pursued American interests and values through an appeal of “openness”, which drew support from the American people.

In *American Empire*, Bacevich’s portrayals of Beard and Williams both note that while the two historians stumbled upon important truths, they downplayed or were oblivious to foreign evils. As Hitler overtook Europe and Japan bombed Pearl Harbor, Beard was further gripped by his conviction that Roosevelt was dishonest and deceptive, attempting to compensate for

inadequacies of his New Deal¹. In his arguments against the orthodox view of the origins of the Cold War, Williams “all but ignored the [immoral and evil] character of the Soviet regime”². In explaining this astigmatism, Bacevich portrays these individuals as increasingly wrapped and invested in pursuing a full-fledged antithesis to orthodoxy. As the US entered World War II and Roosevelt began to betray the original hopeful vision Beard had of him, Beard became defensive, “brooding and embittered”³ – clinging more desperately and tightly to his theories. I propose that, in a broader sense, these dissenters’ relative level of neglect towards the evils and failures of Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union can be explained by their own criticism of other mainstream American leaders. While their novel contributions to foreign policy were and are significant, the dissenters’ foreign policy prescriptions and perspectives also fell prey to their domestic interests and priorities. Underlying the “dissenting” ideology framing itself as the antithesis of the “myth” was a strong frustration with existing economic systems. During the American rise to global prominence, dissenters strongly criticized capitalist systems in the US as core to American expansionism. “At no time”, Beard wrote, “has the United States refused to defend American commercial enterprise in any part of the globe.”⁴ This defense of commercial enterprise was characterized the puppeteering of the US government by capitalist interests. However, advocating against intervention when the US was directly involved in conflict expresses a foreign policy prescription associated with domestic interests. Dissenters’ arguments were not wholly based on the principle that any sort of foreign interventionism or expansionism was unjustified, given their lack of objection to the interventionism of other countries. Rather, countries whose domestic economic policy was unsatisfactory needed to address it rather than

¹ Andrew Bacevich, *The Realities and Consequences of U.S. Diplomacy* (Harvard University Press, 2002), 23.

² Bacevich, *The Realities and Consequences of U.S. Diplomacy*, 28.

³ Bacevich, *The Realities and Consequences of U.S. Diplomacy*, 22.

⁴ Bacevich, *The Realities and Consequences of U.S. Diplomacy*, 14.

expand. Hence, dissenters' domestic economic pursuits provoked a sympathetic apathy of sorts towards foreign countries also pursuing those pursuits, even if in unsavory ways. As Williams wrote, the United States should be “moving forward” with the rest of the world – building a “true human community based... on social property [rather] than upon private property”⁵ – rather than fighting it.

⁵ Bacevich, *The Realities and Consequences of U.S. Diplomacy*, 29.