

known among international relations scholars for his work on normative theory, eventually became the Rockefeller Foundation's Vice President for International Programs and a trustee of the Carnegie Council. At the Rockefeller Foundation, he organized and funded many different efforts to advance the discipline of international politics. Guilhot writes, "One might reasonably ask whether, had he not played a crucial role within the Rockefeller Foundation for several decades, the field of IR would be the same, or whether it would exist at all" (p. 15).

If *The Invention of International Relations Theory* tells the story suggested by its title, it is not because the 1954 conference achieved its aims as they were understood by most of the participants. The conference may, however, have propelled the assembled realists forward in their efforts to establish a discipline separate from political science and rooted in an understanding of power politics and national interest dictated by the exigencies of the moment. And in this way, it may have invented the international relations theory that guided the thinking of American policy-makers well into the Vietnam era.

Guilhot has assembled an outstanding group of contributors, who prompt us to reconsider what we know about international relations theory and its relationship to "great debates" between realists and idealists and, later, traditionalists and behavioralists. They remind us of the role that organizations—especially those with large endowments—can play in the production and dissemination of ideas. They demonstrate, convincingly, that theory always arises out of a very specific, and often complex, social context. Perhaps most important, they dispel some of the enduring myths about the interwar origins of modern realism—myths that realists themselves have sometimes found useful.

—ROBERT E. WILLIAMS, JR.

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***Moral Combat: Good and Evil in World War II***, Michael Burleigh (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2011), 672 pp., \$29.99 cloth.

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Michael Burleigh is a prolific writer on issues of ethics in history, notably the crimes of Nazi Germany and other totalitarian regimes. In this popular survey of some of the larger moral demands and dilemmas of fighting World War II, he is never boring

and quite often right. He is also, far too frequently, surprisingly uninformed.

Burleigh asserts in a muscular preface that he will not indulge in "moralizing enthusiasm," then proceeds to write nearly 600 pages of largely that. Still, most readers

will appreciate his keen insight on certain key issues, at least concerning the major Western Allies. Overall, his appreciation of moral quandaries facing the Western powers is balanced and fair, if also divorced from real-time operational contexts that most students of wartime ethics would wish to consider. The main argument ultimately shades into an apologia for the Western Allies that can overlook uncomfortable facts in order to absolve them of anything done to win the war, because the enemy was so terrible. Also problematic is his assertion that the Soviet Union was about as evil and predatory as Nazi Germany, without requisite discussion of the morality of Western aid to Stalin's armies and alliance with his regime. Burleigh's always steroidal prose is crisp, though in places only because he has dispatched whole fields of straw men with a flamethrower.

The most richly insightful chapters depict the hard evil of Nazism and the symbiosis of Nazi extermination plans with Wehrmacht military operations and war crimes. The tragic and sordid story of the Holocaust is retold with cold-eyed condemnation of perpetrators, from casual murderers to the great beasts conducting state-executed genocides. His canvas of collaboration and resistance by Jewish councils is subtle and deeply humane, unusually so in a book that often and too easily tosses about Manichean "angel vs. demon" judgments.

There is also sound appreciation of the difficulty of any effective response by the Western Allies to the death camps, juxtaposed with the non-response by the far closer Soviet Union. However, Burleigh elides over the wartime behavior of the Catholic hierarchy. Individual Catholics are correctly situated on all sides of the moral divide, but there is a singular absence of consideration

of institutional obligations or widespread participation by Catholics in systematic war crimes and genocide. He simply absolves Pius XII of moral failing, dismissing pressing questions as "Communist-inspired attempts to demonize him in the postwar years" (p. 468). He is rightly solicitous of the suffering of Catholic populations and admires morally heroic individuals, yet is mostly silent on wider confessional sins. This is notable, given a pronounced willingness to render collective judgment of the putative moral behavior of other, whole populations. For instance, he tells us that "significant numbers of [German] Protestants were prepared to remodel Jesus as an honorary Aryan" (p. 26).

Burleigh is not at all reliable on Japan: the text and bibliography confirm that he is unfamiliar with much research on the Second Sino-Japanese War or the Pacific War. Readers are thus whisked, in just a few pages, from clichéd views of the Nanjing massacre in 1937 to the Japanese-Soviet treaty of 1941 (pp. 19–21). He successfully relays the almost-forgotten brutality of the Japanese military in China and across Asia, but seriously misunderstands Japan's largely ordinary war aims and the motivations of its fighting men. Conventionally, Fascist Italy is downgraded to a mere junior partner, not a serious and independent moral actor within the Axis. A solid and nuanced discussion of collaboration versus resistance focuses on France, with some reference to harsher conditions in Poland. But there is little to nothing on the morally radical circumstances of the Eastern Front. Burleigh thus misses a chance to reason out the hardest moral lessons of total war—of moral and immoral combat without mercy, garlands, or law.

The imbalance may arise from Burleigh's unadulterated Anglocentrism, which in

turn underlies wrathful rejection of the (mostly correct) location by scholars of the strategic center of World War II in the Soviet-German war of 1941–1945—a truth that does not diminish the heroism, sacrifice, and enormous contribution of Western soldiers, sailors, and flyers to the banishment of Nazism from the world. Instead, we are given this: “To construe the D-Day landings as anything other than a noble enterprise . . . seems perverse” (p. ix). Indeed. Who says otherwise?

Burleigh too often prefers anecdotes over evidence that is easily available from reliable scholarship. From the start he evinces an angry, wounded indignation toward professional historians. Yet, more familiarity with their work might have prevented his parroting German generals and other diarists long discredited. Personality is always larger than policy, a common feature of popular histories. That is unfortunate, as decades out-of-date understandings of Neville Chamberlain, Hirohito, and other leaders are importantly and factually wrong; Winston Churchill is always heroic and wise; while FDR and George Marshall are presented in silly caricatures. Readers encounter campaigns and battles of the greatest war ever fought only *en passant*, invariably to be shown that Western commanders and troops were brave and heroic. Most were. But not so the enemy, ever. No serious student of war will accept this conceit. Nor should readers principally interested in wartime ethics be satisfied with black-and-white judgments that ignore gray contingencies and unknown outcomes, and the special circumstances that make the ethics of war mostly a set of “hard cases.”

These problems merge in Burleigh’s account of strategic bombing. He is refreshingly more fair to the Western Allied air

forces than is currently popular or politically correct, notably among left-wing Anglo-American and younger German nationalist historians. However, he is also wrong on important facts, for example when he denies the documented reality that Western air forces deliberately targeted civilians over the last year of the war, a fact that so troubled the British prime minister he sought to alter the record to deflect responsibility onto his air chiefs. Worse, Burleigh delivers a moral whitewash that goes past any argument from military necessity for “area bombing” (the Royal Air Force term) to justify collective punishment through bombing, coupled with wide destruction meant to diminish the enemy’s war-making capacity:

The Allied aim was to destroy military and industrial targets, their workforces included, to defeat an evil system that enjoyed overwhelming popular support. The German people had to share the fate of the regime they supported so enthusiastically when it was crushing the liberty and lives of others, so that when the war ended the peace would not merely become another armistice before a third conflict (p. 482).

*Moral Combat* is interesting and entertaining. It is vivid and engaging, though deeply marred by errors long ago corrected by other historians. It is essentially a triumphalist narrative of the Western Allied war effort. Despite its several virtues, in the end it should be read with skepticism.

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