

for a second world war. Like many of his comrades, Geiser had become disillusioned with capitalism as a result of the Great Depression. He had joined organizations that were affiliated with the Communist Party, and it was through these alliances that he eventually went to Spain.

The majority of Geiser's letters were written to his wife, Sylvia Segal, whom he called 'Impy'. Although he served as a political commissar for much of the war, a position designed to ensure compliance with and support of Communist Party doctrine, Geiser's letters to Impy focus more on personal issues than political ones. They convey the humanity of the situation of the men who were fighting in Spain. While they have been typeset for this book, most of the letters were handwritten and come from the files of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade Archives at New York University. The correspondence displayed Geiser's desire to keep in close touch with loved ones, as well as his desire for news from home.

Other letters were written to his brother, Bennet, who did not share Carl's devotion to the anti-fascist cause. These missives portray the ideological side of Geiser's writing, as he works to convince his brother that by fighting in Spain he is trying to prevent another world war. For example, in June 1937 he wrote to Bennet, 'There is one other thing you forget. The war here is not between two governments, but between the Spanish Government . . . against a handful of landlords & capitalists who engineered an uprising against the government' (p. 35). This type of political education was typical of the letters to Geiser's brother.

Overall, this is a useful collection of letters that allows the reader or researcher easy access to important primary documents from the Spanish Civil War. The introduction, epilogue, and suggested readings provided by the editors help to provide historical context to the letters. This book can be easily read by a wide range of audiences.

Substitute for Power: Wartime British Propaganda to the Balkans, 1939–1944. By Ioannis Stefanidis. Surrey and Burlington, VT: Ashgate. 2012. ix + 318 pp. £75, \$135.25 hbk. ISBN 978 1 4094 5502 8

Reviewed by: Dragan Bakić, *Institute for Balkan Studies, Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Serbia*

Using a wide range of government records, Professor Stefanidis has written a comprehensive account of the under-studied subject of British propaganda to the Balkans during the Second World War. It covers the region as a whole, with its overarching 'regional themes', and the individual cases of Albania, Bulgaria, Romania, Greece, and Yugoslavia – Turkey is justifiably excluded on account of its neutrality in the war – which differed in that the first country was an Italian protectorate, the second and third were Axis satellites, and the latter two enemy-occupied states whose governments-in-exile had the status of Allies. Of necessity Stefanidis had to outline the substance of British policy towards the Balkans to which the propaganda campaign was related and, in doing so, he heavily relied on Elisabeth Barker's classic monograph *British Policy in South-East Europe in the Second World War* (London: Macmillan, 1976). Reflecting the dilemmas and difficulties of the

Foreign Office and other agencies concerned with foreign affairs, British propaganda suffered from the same organizational confusion and intra- and interdepartmental bickering which hampered its effectiveness. The workings of this complex and diffused mechanism are detailed from the initial period of Balkan neutrality until the late stages of the war, with a clear distinction between overt 'white' and the deceiving 'black' propaganda.

In Bulgaria and Romania, junior Axis partners, British propaganda did not have much chance of stirring resistance movements: the two countries were firmly in the grip of the German army, beyond Anglo-American military reach and terrified of the prospect of ultimate Soviet domination. Not even ingenious tricks such as the invention of the resistance leader Vlaicu in Romania with the aim of turning him into self-fulfilling prophecy could have altered those hard facts (pp. 154–5). Moreover, any sign of leniency towards the Sofia regime was bound to provoke vehement objections on the part of the Greek and Yugoslav governments. Greece and Yugoslavia provided a much more fertile ground for dissemination of propaganda in view of their population's predominantly pro-British sympathies and the allied relations with their kings and cabinets who found shelter in London. On the other hand, these two countries, along with Albania, became a theatre of civil war between communist-led resistance movements and those of nationalists whose allegiance lay with pre-war royal authorities.

British diplomacy and, consequently, the propaganda machinery struggled to resolve the contradictions that arose from dealing with the conflicting parties. While short-term military interests necessitated a support for communists engaged in full-scale fighting against the Axis troops, regardless of their losses and reprisals against civilians, post-war political considerations favoured the pro-British nationalists despite their often passive attitude towards – and sometimes collaboration with – the occupying forces. This controversy arguably left more leeway for propagandists to impose their own opinions and prejudices than it would otherwise have been possible in times of war. The BBC in particular appears to have been castigated for disregarding official instructions. Its Greek and Yugoslav services often aired information and views which ran contrary to those of the émigré governments and, by extension, the Foreign Office, Political Warfare Executive (PWE), and Special Operations Executive (SOE), which were sensitive to the exiles' susceptibilities (pp. 215–22, 282–9). The minister of economic warfare, who was in charge of SOE, Lord Selborne, made the harshest accusation to the effect that the BBC was outpouring left-wing propaganda and undermining European societies (pp. 288, 305). In the final instance, it was *realpolitik* that determined the British stance. London used all its resources including direct military intervention to suppress the communist ELAS in Greece, a country deemed crucial for British interests in the eastern Mediterranean, whereas it dropped the royalists and gave all-out support to Tito's partisans in less important Yugoslavia. It would be most interesting to examine to what extent British propaganda facilitated Tito's rise to power, particularly in the period prior to the Red Army's descent on the country, but the receiving end of that propaganda remains outside the scope of this study on account of practical difficulties. Nevertheless, this study could benefit from the more extensive consultation of secondary material in English which would provide better insight into the relationship between the realities on the ground and Britain's propaganda campaign.

In assessing the overall British propaganda effort, Stefanidis points out its role in 'sustaining morale, spreading defeatism and deceiving the enemy as to one's real

intentions' and finds it 'a qualified success' on all three scores (p. 306). Such assessment, different from those of other authors that he mentions in his concluding remarks and perhaps contrary to the suggestion of his own title, is the outcome of Stefanidis' inclination to largely ignore the impact of the wartime effort on British post-war political aims as far as these could have been formulated or pursued. Finally, an eventual second edition of this book should see two minor mistakes corrected: Robert Vansittart was permanent undersecretary at the Foreign Office (1930–8) and then chief diplomatic adviser to the government (1938–41), not 'minister of State for Foreign Affairs from 1935 to 1940' (p. 7); the first name of General Mihailović, the commander of the Yugoslav royalist resistance movement, was Dragoljub and not Dragiša (p. 44).

Britain and the Bomb: Nuclear Diplomacy, 1964–1970. By David James Gill. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press. 2014. xii + 304 pp. \$65.00 hardback. ISBN 978 0 8047 8658 4

Reviewed by: Christoph Laucht, *Swansea University, UK*

In his monograph *Britain and the Bomb: Nuclear Diplomacy, 1964–1970*, David James Gill examines British nuclear diplomacy during Prime Minister Harold Wilson's first term in office. Based on meticulous archival research in Britain and the United States, the book offers the first comprehensive account of nuclear decision-making under Wilson, in particular with regard to changes in British nuclear diplomacy during these years. *Britain and the Bomb* contains six main chapters, plus an introduction, a conclusion, and an epilogue.

Gill lays out his objectives in the introductory chapter, identifying 'three distinct but inter-related strands of British nuclear diplomacy' that lie at the heart of his study (p. 2). These are nuclear-weapons sharing through the creation of a multilateral nuclear force, planning and consultation between the Wilson government and allied governments, and the implementation of a global non-proliferation regime. Taking into account its inconsistent nature, the author 'attempts to balance a collection of disparate, and at times competing, influences in the context of British nuclear diplomacy' (p. 3).

For heuristic purposes, the first two main chapters address the period prior to Wilson's election as prime minister in 1964, providing relevant information for understanding the policy changes that occurred later during his tenure. Chapter 1 explores the development of British nuclear diplomacy from 1945 to 1962. It offers by and large a synthesis of existing key literature on the subject. What stands out in this part, as in the entire book, is an emphasis on monetary and fiscal policies – two areas that have often been overlooked by nuclear historians. Chapter 2 then covers the 20-month period from February 1963, when Wilson became leader of the opposition, to his election as prime minister in October 1964. It focuses on the evolution of British and American nuclear policy during this time and highlights British resistance to NATO's plans to create a nuclear-armed Multilateral Force (MLF) and associated fears of West Germany thereby gaining access to nuclear weapons.

The following four main chapters deal with nuclear diplomacy during the time of Wilson's first stint as prime minister. Chapters 3 and 4 look at the evolution of different plans concerning the sharing of nuclear forces. Gill underlines Wilson's views in favour of proposals for an Atlantic Nuclear Force (ANF) over the much debated MLF. Here, the