

**Michaela Hoenicke Moore, Know Your Enemy. The American Debate on Nazism, 1933–1945, Cambridge (Cambridge University Press) 2010, XVIII–390 p. (Publications of the German Historical Institute), ISBN 978-0-521-82969-4, USD 55,00.**

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Writing from wartime London in December 1939 Sir Robert Vansittart of the British Foreign Office pondered the shape of the peace settlement that would result: »I hope that we shall be less severe and wiser in many respects than at Versailles, but more severe and wiser in others«<sup>1</sup>. While his words presumed an Allied victory and a self-confidence in Britain's flight that would be tested in the summer of 1940 to the extreme, the dilemma that Vansittart identifies is one that is prominent in Michaela Hoenicke-Moore's excellent monograph »Know Your Enemy – The American Debate on Nazism 1933–1945«. Put simply, and with considerably less aplomb than either Hoenicke-Moore or Vansittart: »What to do about Hitler's Nazi Germany?« Hoenicke-Moore's new volume addresses this and other questions surrounding Nazi Germany. The work provides a detailed contextual survey of US policy towards the Third Reich grounded in comprehensive archival research from the viewpoint of both the Roosevelt administration and the American people.

The volume has a number of impressive aspects which will make it a reference for scholars of the Second World War period for the foreseeable future. One of the many outstanding features is the blending of official government policies with the views of the American public. What is revealed is a multiplicity of viewpoints within the United States on Nazi Germany with remarkably few in outright opposition from the outset. Hoenicke-Moore asserts that »even after that country had declared war on the United States«, Americans were »not predisposed to hate or fear Germany« (p. 6), with public opinion being »marked by a high degree of diversity and incoherence« (p. 11). The author provides an explanation of the incoherence as being drawn from the experience of US involvement in the First World War and the interwar years. Equally the author explains the debate that was had within the Administration about how far to distinguish between the German people and German leadership, and how far they were conflated both consciously and subconsciously within America more broadly. Hoenicke-Moore then explains the problem this posed for the Roosevelt administration in having to enlighten »a mostly sceptical society why Germany posed a threat to their country« (p. 6). The task of constructing an enemy image for Nazi Germany provides Hoenicke-Moore with the opportunity to provide insight into both Roosevelt's Foreign Policy making and the manner in which he managed his administration. The longer term antecedents of Roosevelt's approach addressed by the author include the experience Roosevelt had of Germany from his childhood and early public life, especially his awareness of Germany's Unrestricted Submarine Warfare campaign as Assistant Secretary of the Navy during the First World War. On the basis of the evidence here work supplies Hoenicke-Moore

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<sup>1</sup> 119 Memorandum by Vansittart on Letter from Lord Lothian (British Ambassador to Washington) to Halifax (Foreign Secretary), 14 December 1939, FO 800 324. The Papers of Viscount Halifax as Foreign Secretary, The National Archives, Kew London.

makes a sound assessment of FDR's approach up until 1941. »Primarily relying on his own considerable public relations skills, he had [...] chosen to educate his countrymen about the formidable threat building up around them through an informal strategy that [...] obfuscated certain aspects of the Third Reich« (p.114–115). There were changes to Roosevelt's approach after Germany's declaration of war in December 1941, but they were perhaps not as dramatically as one might suspect as the administration worked toward the mantra that Hoenicke-Moore uses as the title to chapter four »The Principal Battleground of This War Is American Public Opinion«. In identifying the President's approach as leading to competition and conflict amongst the administration is not wholly revelatory, the analysis that follows is in discussing the importance of Isolationism amongst the American people, in looking at the debate over the call for »unconditional surrender« and in examining the Morgenthau Plan(s) for the fate of post-war Germany.

Flowing out of the detailed study of Morgenthau's efforts to address Germany, »Know Your Enemy« shines new light on discussion of US post-war planning efforts more broadly. This is examined in customary detail as the volume turns, slowly as we learn the American people did, from considering Germany as just a posturing menace to peace to a real threat to US national interest. Here one point of disagreement emerges. Hoenicke-Moore writes »in spite of Roosevelt's insistence that the war first had to be won before peace plans could be seriously considered, no one interested in a peaceful Europe assumed that military victory would solve the German problem, and discussion of war aims began as soon as the United States entered the war« (p.106–107). In fact, the administration had already made considerable efforts to consider the shape of the post-war world and the US role in it. Much attention has been placed on Leo Pasvolksy's work as Chair of the Advisory Committee on Post-War Foreign Policy but previous efforts had been undertaken, albeit sporadically, since later 1939 by Under Secretary of State Sumner Welles through the Advisory Committee on Problems in Foreign Relations. In endorsing Hoenicke-Moore's broader argument, central to efforts both before and after Pearl Harbor was the future of Europe and Germany's place in the community of nations.

Overall then, »Know Your Enemy – The American Debate on Nazism 1933–1945« is a very fine piece of work, not least because one does get a real sense of the ›debate‹ that was had in the United States on Germany and National Socialism during the Roosevelt administration. The book is comprehensive in its scope and delivers an all embracing analysis in erudite style. To end with a plea: one hopes the merits of this volume might inspire its author or other scholars to provide an equally comprehensive accounts of US relations with Fascist Italy or the Soviet Union in the 1930s and 1940s.