

**WAR AND THE  
LIBERAL CONSCIENCE**

by Michael Howard  
Rutgers, 1978, 143 pp. \$8  
L of C 78-50655  
ISBN 0-8135-0866-5

"Mars, the stupidest of the Gods," railed Erasmus. Judging from this survey of four centuries of effort to abolish him, the god of war may be also the most intractable. In the 16th century as in ours, war has been blamed on the vanities of the powerful, on the repression of peoples, on ignorance of one's true interest. In this book, the Oxford Professor of the History of War defines liberals as people profoundly dissatisfied with their world and confident of the power of reason to change it. But whatever these people hope for, he writes, they have to begin with the world they find; as threats multiplied and evolved, liberals have often gone to war for the sake of peace—occasionally, as in 1914, against one another. "At the root of the dilemma of liberal thinkers lies the habit of seeing war as a distinct and abstract entity about which one can generalize at large. . . . But 'war' is simply the generic term for the use of armed force by states or aspirants to statehood to achieve their political objectives." Howard shies away from what remains implicit in his argument: Liberals are torn between love of peace and love of justice; however great their desire for peace, in the crunch they discover causes they hold yet dearer. From this frequent incompatibility of cherished values, the pangs of the liberal conscience arise.

*Contemporary Affairs***THE EMPTY  
POLLING BOOTH**

by Arthur T. Hadley  
Prentice-Hall, 1978  
179 pp. \$8.95  
L of C 78-16966  
ISBN 0-13-274928-9

The Case of the Missing American Voter has long intrigued the Holmeses and Watsons of political science and journalism. In the last presidential election, some 65 million members or 46 percent of an electorate of 150 million chose *not* to vote, thereby constituting themselves the largest enfranchised political group in America. Hadley, a former *Newsweek* political writer, eliminates many theories about the nonvoter, refuting popular assumptions that more often than not the "refrainer" is (a) a rural Southerner or a resident of a Northern city's slums; (b) black; (c) young; (d) cynical about life and government; (e)

poorer than the voter; (f) less educated than the voter; (g) prevented from voting by archaic regulations, fraud, difficulty of access to facilities, or threat of violence (the belief most fervently held in "the Boobus Americanus stereotype," according to Hadley). Citing statistics and delineating profiles of nonvoters gleaned from a poll that he and Robert Teeter conducted in 1976-77, the author proceeds to identify a decidedly different (often middle-class white-collar urban) composite refrainer. Since Thomas Jefferson's time, the belief has persisted that the country is best served when only a small group of educated and concerned citizens go to the polls. Hadley asks if we really want the nonvoters to vote (his own answer? a resounding "yes") and concludes with suggestions on how to get refrainers to exercise their rights. Among them: postal card registration; making "V-Day" a holiday in federal election years.

**EGYPT'S UNCERTAIN  
REVOLUTION UNDER  
NASSER AND SADAT**

by Raymond William Baker  
Harvard, 1978, 300 pp. \$16  
L of C 78-18356  
ISBN 0-674-24154-1

**SHAHHAT: An Egyptian**

by Richard Critchfield  
Syracuse, 1978, 258 pp.  
\$12.95 cloth, \$6.95 paper  
L of C 78-11945  
ISBN 0-8156-2202-3  
0-8156-0151-4 pbk

Egypt's modern leaders, in the view of Baker, a Williams College political scientist, have embraced "bureaucratic feudalism." Egyptians as a people have escaped "a situation of colonial dependency only by a new dependency on the cleverness of their authoritarian rulers." He finds both the late Gamal Abdul Nasser, who led the 1952 coup against the monarchy, and Anwar es-Sadat, who succeeded Nasser in 1970, fundamentally distrustful of the masses. Their failure to provide an ideology or working political institutions has left life in Egypt disrupted but not transformed.

The Aswan dam on the Nile has ended thousands of years of annual flooding in the villages of Upper Egypt where Shahhat, the impetuous young peasant vividly portrayed in Critchfield's book, pursues his life. Yet neither this nor various other forms of government intervention have substantially improved his lot, and new layers of seemingly irrational regulation have been imposed on him and his neighbors. Life to the sturdy Egyptian *fellah* has always seemed to lack order and reason, however, writes Critchfield,

@inproceedings{Howard1978WarAT, title={War and the liberal conscience}, author={Michael T. Howard}, year={1978} }. Michael T. Howard. It is said that war is rooted in the vested interests of the ruling class, but haven't democracies proved to be just as bellicose as other states? It is believed that political disputes should be settled by civilized negotiations, but what if the adversary is not, by accepted standards, "civilized"? Should states steer clear of other states' internal conflicts, or should they help liberate oppressed peoples? Which is the better option: appease War? Liberal. Conscience MICHAEL HOWARD. War and the liberal conscience. In Memoriam. MICHAEL HOWARD. Edith Howard 1891-1977. War and the Liberal Conscience. Columbia University Press New York. 1 THE GROWTH OF THE LIBERAL CONSCIENCE 1500-1792 It is likely that ever since the origins of human society, men-or at least some men, and most women-have intermittently lamented the existence of war, except among those societies which have been able to convert it to pure ritual or pure gain. But even those who saw it as evil normally considered it a necessary evil; one for which responsibility lay elsewhere, which was part of God's purpose for the world, or an indispensable activity in preserving or extending one's creed and culture.