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War Cooperation, and Conflict: The European Possessions in the Caribbean, 1939-1945

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out of sequence if an individual is interested only in a particular campaign of World War II, but they are best read in the context of the entire volume. Indeed, the most important lesson of *Oil and War* is that the fuel oil clock is ticking for the United States right now. America needs to address its own energy future and, in the absence of a national energy policy, decide how best to meet the needs of presently increasing oil demands and dwindling domestic oil resources. Avoiding the debate now may have tragic results later.

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Fitzroy, Andre Baptiste. *War, Cooperation, and Conflict: The European Possessions in the Caribbean, 1939-1945*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1988. 351pp. \$39.95

Unfortunately, F. A. Baptiste's *War, Cooperation, and Conflict* is largely an account of U.S. policy toward the European colonial possessions in the Caribbean during World War II. While the book is well-researched and sound in its judgments, it adds little that is new to a subject which has been treated many times by a variety of scholars. In comparison to *War, Cooperation, and Conflict*, Langer and Gleason's *The Challenge to Isolation* and *The Undeclared War* and Langer's *Our Vichy Gamble* are still fine books on diplomacy; on the Army's role, Stetson Conn's volumes on

hemispheric defense in the Army's famed Green Book series are better; Goodhart's *Fifty Ships That Saved the World* and Abbazia's *Mr. Roosevelt's Navy* offer better perspectives of the naval aspects of World War II in the Caribbean.

Essentially, the focus of the book is wrong. Instead of trying to produce just another work on U.S. policy toward colonialism in the Caribbean during World War II, the author, a West Indian scholar, should have focused on the ramifications of the increased U.S. presence on the Caribbean people and their islands. It is a truism to state that World War II loosened the hold of all traditional colonial powers on their empires. Although we tended to think of this process mostly in connection with far-off Asia and Africa, much of the same process was taking place in the Caribbean at the same time.

So, precisely how did the increased U.S. presence in the islands work to help undermine traditional colonial rule and stimulate nationalism in the black populations of the Caribbean? It is a pity that the author did not approach this subject from the fresh perspective of the Caribbean islands and their peoples, rather than from the stale perspective of U.S. policy.

There are other flaws in the book. It is not appealing visually, having been reproduced in typescript rather than print, and there are many errors, some embarrassing, which are either typos or reflect the author's limited knowledge of technical naval nomenclature and U.S.

geography. Hence, the famous Navy-Marine Corps Fleet Landing Exercises of the 1930s are called "Fleet Handling Exercises," reference is made to "aircraft of Destroyer Squadron" and "one ordinance of enlisted men." Similarly, U.S. geography is butchered. There are references to "Mobile, Florida" and "West Palm Beach, Miami." Does anyone at Greenwood proof-read? Such egregious errors weaken the author's general credibility.

But the fundamental problem with *War, Cooperation, and Conflict* is that the author has written the wrong book. We do not need another book about U.S. policy toward the European colonial possessions in the Caribbean in World War II, even one that is diligently researched and sound in its judgments; we do need a book about the impact of that policy upon nationalism and anticolonialism in the Caribbean. This is not it.

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Townsend, Peter. *The Odds Against Us*. New York: William Morrow & Co., 1987. 240pp. \$16.95

On a tropical evening in the Singapore of 1936, a young RAF pilot made his first solo night flight in a Vildebeest—a great ark of a biplane fighter now mercifully forgotten. This was Peter Townsend's introduction to night flying and the

beginning of a path that led him to command night fighting squadrons against the Germans during the London blitz.

In *The Odds Against Us*, Townsend tells us of his own action in the night skies above Britain and the experiences of those who had to fight what Churchill called "this hellish invention" (bombing) on the ground. His new book is a sequel to his earlier work on the Battle of Britain, *Duel of Eagles*, and has much the same scope.

After losing the Battle of Britain the Germans turned to night bombing raids on London, but night fighting was a new and untried business for the RAF. Prior to that time, fighter pilots just did not fly at night. The development of a night interception began with "cat's-eye" fighters vectored by ground radar but dependent on the pilots eyes to find and kill the bomber. At first Hurricanes were used, and later Defiants. Their four-gun turrets improved the lethality once the target had been seen. Finally, Douglas Havocs with airborne radar were brought into service, which greatly improved the chances of the vectored pilot finding the target. The quad guns in the nose of the Havoc finished the job.

The story of night interception is intimately connected to what Townsend calls the "Wizard War," the development of radar, aircraft radio, and the first of what we now call electronic countermeasures warfare. In this war, scientists—"boffins" as the British called them—played a