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Brutality in an Age of Human Rights: Activism and Counterinsurgency at the End of the British Empire

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frequently throughout the book is the almost prophetic foreshadowing of the experience of millions of people of the Holocaust—pointless cruelty, medical experiments, starvation, disease, louse infestation. Although this deprivation was not true of all Russian prison camps during the war, it was of Hameiri's.

The book is important as war literature and as prisoner-of-war literature and deserves a wide reading. The writing is graphic and the horrors of war are presented in a manner that few will forget. *Hell on Earth* is a vivid reminder that the tragedy of war never should be forgotten or minimized. It is a book to read and on which to reflect. Those who do so will not be disappointed.

TIMOTHY J. DEMY



Brutality in an Age of Human Rights: Activism and Counterinsurgency at the End of the British Empire, by Brian Drohan. Ithaca, NY: Cornell Univ. Press, 2018. 256 pages. \$45.

During its late-twentieth-century wars of decolonization, Great Britain employed counterinsurgency methods, such as indefinite detention and coercive interrogations, that human rights activists challenged. Initially in Afghanistan and Iraq, the United States employed the same counterinsurgency policies and tactics the British had used decades earlier, and, not surprisingly, the United States faced the same legal challenges in the first decade of this century that the British faced from the 1950s through the 1970s. The U.S. legal battles have been well documented over the past decade, and now *Brutality in an Age of Human Rights* exposes the controversial colonial policies and tactics sanctioned by British civilian and military authorities from 1955 to 1975.

When the insurgencies in Iraq and Afghanistan began, U.S. leaders studying past counterinsurgencies had relatively few scholarly works to consult. Then, as the focus on international human rights law grew, so too did the number of books that exposed contentious wartime policies and methods. Brian Drohan's book is a valuable resource for lawyers, planners, and policy writers studying the history of human rights and its effect on counterinsurgency warfare.

Brutality in an Age of Human Rights unequivocally dispels the myth that the British were anything but brutal in their counterinsurgency methods while maintaining a public façade of rule of law adherence during the Cyprus emergency (1955–59), the Aden emergency in Yemen (1963–67), and the Northern Ireland Troubles (during the 1970s). Drohan, a U.S. Army officer, West Point history professor, and historian of modern Britain, expanded his University of North Carolina–Chapel Hill dissertation into this scholarly work that includes 847 endnotes and a detailed bibliography documenting the author's extensive research.

Drohan uncovers what others largely have ignored: the role of human rights activists in shaping wartime policies and practices. Backed by colonial-era records, Drohan persuasively argues that lawyers, local and international societies, and political groups actively challenged British civilian and military leaders—shaping the strategic debates on human rights that affected operational- and tactical-level counterinsurgency methods. Relying on documented incidents, Drohan exposes Britain's harsh tactics and counters the British narrative that mythologized its image of colonial rule through minimal force.

For each conflict considered, Drohan describes its origin, introduces the activist groups, exposes the human rights violations, details the activists' challenges to the British methods, and reveals the British leaders' systematic and bold efforts to deny any brutality against insurgents and innocent civilians. Throughout the book, Drohan provides numerous examples of *lawfare*, a concept he describes as a strategy for using—or misusing—the law to achieve an operational military objective.

Chapters 1 and 2 cover the late 1950s Cyprus insurgency and the Cyprus Bar Council's extensive efforts to counter Britain's coercive interrogation methods to obtain intelligence. With parallels to the war on terror, Greek Cypriot lawyers challenged the colonial secretary's Emergency Regulations that vested near-absolute power in the British military commander on Cyprus. The legal battles continued for years, including an appeal to the European Commission of Human Rights to investigate the British atrocities; however, Britain successfully deflected the allegations until the conflict was resolved without any meaningful resolution of the abuses that British soldiers perpetrated.

In the 1960s, when an anticolonial insurgency arose in the British territory of Aden and Britain employed the same brutal tactics used in Cyprus, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) stepped in to protect unlawfully detained nationalists. Chapters 3 and 4 detail the ICRC and Amnesty International efforts to counter and expose British violations on the international stage. With aggressive, unrelenting campaigns on both sides, it was, as Drohan notes, a protracted and messy affair, with numerous investigations,

British manipulation of the process, and hollow victories for the advocates.

Chapter 5 focuses on British brutality during the Northern Ireland Troubles, including Britain's approval of five techniques used for interrogation of interned prisoners: wall standing, hooding, white noise, sleep deprivation, and a bread-and-water diet. Despite evidence of illegal detention and coercive interrogations, Britain successfully limited government inquiries and shielded or absolved officials and interrogators from legal liability. Years later, when George W. Bush administration officials sanctioned similar enhanced interrogation techniques, those officials likewise were shielded from liability.

Drohan's examination and detailed study of the relationship between human rights activism and British counterinsurgency practices is worthy of review by civilian and military leaders with a role in shaping wartime policy, particularly lawyers, military planners, and policy writers. *Brutality in an Age of Human Rights* is eminently worthy of a spot on the counterinsurgency bookshelf next to David Galula's *Counterinsurgency Warfare* (Praeger, 2006), John Nagl's *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife* (Univ. of Chicago Press, 2005), and the *U.S. Army / U.S. Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual* (Cosimo, 2010).

JEFF A. BOVARNICK



Realist Ethics: Just War Traditions as Power Politics, by Valerie Morkevičius. Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2018. 268 pages. \$34.99.

Professor Valerie Morkevičius offers a provocative thesis in her new book: the just war tradition has more in