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*NSC 68 and the Political Economy of the Early Cold War* by  
Curt Cardwell (review)

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The final core chapter, “Our Sisters in Struggle,” on Third World feminist imaginaries, probably appeals most directly to an audience outside of Middle Eastern studies. Bier argues here that positing “Bandung as a formative moment in the history of global feminisms” challenges the notion that international feminism emerged from Europe and America and was only passively (and incompletely) consumed by nations of the global South (p. 162). Examining the extensive profiles of Third World women that dominated the Egyptian women’s press in the 1950s and 1960s, Bier maps the changing boundaries of Egyptian identity. Egyptian women at times shared a common history of oppression and struggle with women in countries such as China, Yemen, the Soviet Union, Pakistan, and Kenya; at other times these press profiles and interviews highlighted the qualities deemed unique to Egyptian women among revolutionary women (i.e., femininity and fashion awareness).

Bier has written an outstanding, well-crafted, and strikingly original book that fills important gaps in the historiographies of international feminism and of Egyptian history. It is a valuable contribution that deserves wide readership.

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*NSC 68 and the Political Economy of the Early Cold War.*

By CURT CARDWELL. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011. 310 pp. \$80.00 (cloth).

Curt Cardwell provides an interesting if not entirely convincing take on the creation of NSC 68 and its early application by the Truman administration. Cardwell emphasizes the central role of the global economy in general and the dollar gap in particular as the primary motivating factor for creating the document that some consider the blueprint for American policy during the Cold War. In the end, the narrow focus on economic issues falls short of a complete explanation for this seminal document.

Professor Cardwell makes clear from the opening chapters that this book is designed to provide a radically different explanation for the creation of NSC 68. Chapter 1 is devoted to a very good and quite critical historiography of NSC 68. Cardwell argues the current dominant historical narrative is inadequate to explain why the National Security Council, led by Secretary of State Dean Acheson and head

of the State Department's policy planning staff Paul Nitze, needed to create the policy document in the first place. Cardwell dismisses the traditional explanation that NSC 68 was created in response to the Soviets acquiring the atomic bomb and the communists winning the civil war in China in the fall of 1949. Chapter 2 combines a standard revisionist explanation for the origin of the Cold War (American need for economic hegemony), with a particular source for this American position. Professor Cardwell describes the majority of American policy makers as "multilateralists" who sought "the establishment of an open, global, capitalist economy" (p. 30). This commitment to multilateralism was the source of the economic origin of NSC 68.

Chapters 3 through 5 form the foundation of Cardwell's argument that the dollar gap, defined as the inability of other countries to acquire American dollars to pay for needed American exports, was the primary cause for the reassessment of American policy that led to NSC 68. It is also the strongest part of the book, as the author provides a very informative and detailed discussion of the economic problems facing the United States and Western Europe from 1946 to 1952. Cardwell argues that the United States found itself on the horns of a dilemma during this period due to the economic weakness of its European allies. The Marshall Plan, the primary response to this economic imbalance, was not sufficient to solve the problem. Indeed, key members of the Truman administration were certain that some form of additional direct aid to Europe would be needed after the European Recovery Program (the official name of the Marshall Plan) expired in 1952 to overcome the dollar gap and prevent the Europeans from reverting back to 1930s-style attempts to establish autarchy.

Unfortunately for the Truman administration, it was not considered likely that any further direct aid would be forthcoming from Congress, especially since the European Recovery Program had been sold as the solution to Europe's problems. Indeed, Congress was already shaving the amount sent to Europe in 1950, and there was consideration of shutting the program down early. Chapter 5's explanation of the sterling-dollar crisis of 1949–1950 emphasizes the potential for the British to reestablish a closed trading sphere within the Commonwealth, which would lock out the United States and collapse the attempt to coordinate cooperation among the European economies.

Thus, in chapters 6 and 7 Cardwell finally discusses the development and implementation of NSC 68 as a response to this fear of autarchy and the dollar gap. The author posits that because Acheson and Nitze were aware of and concerned about the dollar gap, to the point of saying some form of aid would be needed even if the Soviet Union did

not exist, they therefore were primarily guided by this economic necessity in recommending escalating the military aspect of the Cold War. In short, arms sales and military assistance would replace the Marshall Plan's direct grants as the means of alleviating the dollar gap and tying the Europeans more tightly to America's global economic vision. In addition, the restoration of triangular trade with "Third World" countries, encouraged by the stockpiling of vital raw materials, would assist in the prevention of autarchy and in soaking up some of the dollar gap.

Although Cardwell does make a very strong case for an economic component for NSC 68's development, his monocausal explanation is too limiting for such an all-important policy decision. And Cardwell is clear that NSC 68 is *the* vital elucidation of American policy for the Cold War, dismissing scholars who argue that NSC 68's impact has been overstated. Cardwell's concluding chapter ties most of the undesirable actions and consequences of the Cold War to NSC 68 and the multilateralism that produced it. A very good source for understanding the dollar gap and the economy of the Truman administration, *NSC 68 and the Political Economy of the Cold War* falls short in its attempt to fully explain NSC 68 and its impact.

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*Free World? The Campaign to Save the World's Refugees, 1956–1963.*  
By PETER GATRELL. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011.  
278 pp. \$90.00 (cloth).

Peter Gatrell, one of the premier scholars of twentieth-century European migration and population flows, turns his attention to World Refugee Year (WRY) in his latest book, *Free World?* Most histories of post-World War II refugee affairs only passingly touch upon WRY, an effort in 1959–1960 by noncommunist member nations of the United Nations and a variety of NGOs to publicize and to solve the world's refugee problems. Gatrell seeks to fill this gap. He believes that WRY was a singular moment, one that reveals much about the place of refugees in politics and culture, the state of humanitarianism, and the meanings of citizenship, as well as its antithesis, statelessness, in the late 1950s.

*Free World?* begins with two introductory chapters. Gatrell first outlines the political, economic, and social forces that produced refugee flows and shaped the politics of refugee affairs in the late 1950s. Not only do the usual suspects—the Cold War, World War II, decoloni-