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Introduction by Peter Jackson

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## Contents

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Introduction by Peter Jackson, University of Glasgow .....	2
Review by Lucian M. Ashworth, Memorial University of Newfoundland.....	5
Review by Justus D. Doenecke, Professor Emeritus, New College of Florida, Sarasota.....	7
Review by David G. Haglund, Queen's University.....	9
Author's Response by Andrew J. Williams, University of St. Andrews .....	13

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## Introduction by Peter Jackson, University of Glasgow

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Andrew Williams has written an original and imaginative book that has rightfully earned high praise from all three of the reviewers below. The core objectives of *France, Britain and the United States* are twofold. The first is to integrate the role of France into the history of Trans-Atlantic relations in the period 1900 through 1940. The second is to marry the history of international thought with international history in an analysis that pays particular attention to the contributions of French thinkers during this period. Williams achieves both aims in a study that makes a very significant contribution to the disciplines of history and international relations.

Throughout this study Williams argues that there existed a fundamentally different approach to international thought among French political theorists and policy elites. He identifies “distrust of idealist liberalism” as “an enduring trope of French intellectual thought” (49). This distinctive characteristic of French intellectual thought led to a more pessimistic approach to international relations in both theory and practice. This insight shapes the lens through which Williams interprets contending French and ‘Anglo-Saxon’ perspectives on the great international questions of this seismic era in world politics. While some critics might object that this approach obscures the differences between the various (and often contending) currents of international thought in all three states during this period, they would certainly agree that the larger project of restoring the French perspective to the narrative is both important and necessary. Lucian Ashworth, Justus Doenecke and David Hagland all emphasise Williams’s achievement in taking the French perspective seriously.

Ashworth praises Williams’s “richly layered story of the interactions of the intellectual and policy circles in Britain, France and the United States.” He further praises the research effort upon which the book is based. Williams blends government records, private papers, and a wide range of published primary material with a wide reading in the history of ideas, International Relations theory, and the secondary literature in international history. Ashworth’s lone substantive criticism is that Williams has not taken a clear position on “the relationship between foreign policy and international thought.” Ashworth describes the issue thusly: “Does international thought emerge as a rationalization of foreign policies based mainly on the expediciencies of power, or is foreign policy itself a creation of different worldviews and therefore a product of international theorizing?” This strikes me as a strange way to frame such a fundamental question. Leaving aside the vexed issue of what, precisely, one means by “international theorizing,” the response must surely be that the relationship between ideas and policy depends on the domestic and international context in which policy is made and on the personalities involved. It is difficult, in any case, to find any examples in the history of world politics where foreign policy decision-making was “a product of international theorizing.”

Justus Doeneke praises *France, Britain and the United States* for making “a positive addition to diplomatic history” and in particular for conveying French *mentalités* during this period in a succinct analysis of the trans-Atlantic dynamics. He seems also to agree with Williams that by 1939 France was “economically, politically and morally bankrupt.” Like most scholars (and pundits) who make this judgement about 1930s France, neither Doeneke nor Williams are very precise in explaining what it means to be ‘politically bankrupt’ or ‘morally bankrupt.’ These are empty analytical categories that ultimately explain very little. Indeed they tell us more about the dangers of reading history backwards than they do about French politics and society on the eve of the Second World War. Doeneke does question various judgements advanced in the book, mainly concerning U.S. policy, President Woodrow Wilson, and Wilsonianism. Overall, however, he finds much to admire in *France, Britain and the United States*.

The same is true of David Haglund, who approves of Williams's aim to provide a corrective to the marked tendency to ignore the role of France in the existing literature on trans-Atlantic relations. Haglund concurs that an important theme in the story of these relations is one of "squandered opportunity." He does make two interesting criticisms, however. He identifies a tendency throughout to assume fundamental similarities in British and American responses to the great international challenges of the period. "It bears emphasizing," Haglund asserts, "that relations during the 1930s between Washington and London gave every appearance of being just as dysfunctional as were those between either Washington and Paris or London and Paris." Haglund also disputes Williams's use of 'liberalism' as an analytical category into which all three powers can be usefully placed. It is true that the meaning attached to the term 'liberal' changes dramatically when one crosses the Atlantic. But few historians of France would agree with Haglund that French politics and society "betrayed far more affinities with corporatism than liberalism." Indeed it is hard to think of a European society less imbued with corporatist politics than the French Third Republic.<sup>1</sup>

On one point all three reviewers are in agreement: the quality of the research and analysis on offer in *France, Britain and the United States* bodes very well for Volume II - which will take the story of Franco-British-American relations from 1940 through to the end of the Cold War in 1990.

#### Participants:

**Andrew J. Williams** is Professor of International Relations at the University of St Andrews in the UK. He is *Docteur ès Sciences Politiques* from the University of Geneva. His recent works include *France, Britain and the United States in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, 1900 – 1940: A Reappraisal*. (Palgrave, 2014); *Liberalism and War: The Victors and the Vanquished* (Routledge, 2006) and; *Failed Imagination? The Anglo – American New World Order from Wilson to Bush*, (Manchester UP, 2007) He is now working on a second volume of *France, Britain and the United States in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century*, to take the account up to 1975 or 1990. He is the Editor of *The International History Review*.

**Peter Jackson** is Professor of Global Security at the University of Glasgow. He studied at Carleton University, the University of Calgary and the University of Cambridge. He has also held research and teaching posts at Yale University, Aberystwyth University, Strathclyde University and Sciences Po in Paris. He is co-editor of *Intelligence and National Security*, and has written widely on the history of international relations in the first half of the twentieth century as well as the role of intelligence in decision-making. He is now writing a history of statecraft since the French Revolution.

**Lucian M. Ashworth** is Professor and Head of the Department of Political Science at Memorial University of Newfoundland. His current research focuses on the history of international Relations (IR) theory, and on the disciplinary history of IR. This builds on a number of previous interventions on the politics and history of the inter-war period (including on the absent idealists, the early feminist IR of Helena Swanwick, and Halford

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<sup>1</sup> See, for example, Pierre Rosnavallon, *L'État en France de 1789 à nos jours* (Paris: Seuil, 1990); *idem.*, *Le Modèle politique français. La société civile contre le jacobinisme de 1789 à nos jours* (Paris: Seuil, 2004); Sudhir Hazareesingh, *Political Traditions in Modern France* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1994).

Mackinder as League supporter). He is the author most recently of *A History of International Thought. From the Origins of the Modern State to Academic International Relations*, published by Routledge in 2014.

**Justus D. Doenecke** is Professor Emeritus of History at New College of Florida. Among his books are *In Danger Undaunted: The Anti-Interventionist Movement of 1940-1941 as Revealed in the Powers of the America First Committee* (1990); *From Isolation to War, 1931-1941* (with John E. Wilz, 3rd ed.; 2002); *Storm on the Horizon: The Challenge to American Intervention, 1939-1941* (2000); *Debating Franklin D. Roosevelt's Foreign Policies* (with Mark A. Stoler, 2005); and *Nothing Less Than War: A New History of American Entry into World War I* (2011). He is currently writing a study on American debates concerning US engagement in World War I, the Paris Peace Conference, the League fight, and the 1920 presidential election.

**David G. Haglund** is a Professor of Political Studies at Queen's University (Kingston, Ontario, Canada). His research focuses on transatlantic security, and on Canadian and American international security policy. Among his books are *Latin America and the Transformation of U.S. Strategic Thought, 1936-1940* (1984), and *Over Here and Over There: Canada-US Defence Cooperation in an Era of Interoperability* (2001). He has recently completed a monograph on ethnic diasporas and their impact upon security relations between the United States and Canada, entitled *People in Motion: Ethnic Diasporas and the Canada-US Security Community, from the Civil War to the Present* (forthcoming in 2015).

**Review by Lucian M. Ashworth, Memorial University of Newfoundland**

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One of the marks of a book that adds to our knowledge of a subject is the telling of a story from a different angle. The international history of the first four decades of the twentieth century is well picked over, but when ‘eyed awry,’ to use Shakespeare’s term, our certainties fall away, and new narratives emerge that give different meanings to the same events. The great value of Andrew Williams’s book to the history of international thought lies in just this act of looking awry. So much of what we write about early twentieth century history is dominated by the think tanks and the security concerns of the two English-speaking great powers that we are apt to forget that there were other powers, with other experiences, that were also trying to make sense of the same rapidly changing global landscape. The new intellectual universe that Williams opens up for us is the French one, but he does this through a richly layered story of the interactions of the intellectual and policy circles in Britain, France and the United States. This allows Williams to not only bring in the French case (which is in itself an important task), but also to say things new about the British and American cases through the lens of the interactions with the French ‘dissenting voice’ (4). A good example of the latter is the discussion of the role of think tanks in the development of Anglophone international thought and policy.

The argument of the book, though, does more than just give us a history of intellectual trends. It also links those trends to the wider events of the time. Williams’s narrative is, therefore, what in International Relations (IR) theory circles is called a largely ‘externalist’ approach. By this I mean a view that sees theory as being influenced and shaped by events, rather than the ‘internalist’ case of people like Brian Schmidt, who see the internal dynamics of a theoretical approach as the major determinant of the form of theory.<sup>1</sup> Williams’s approach, however, is more than just a pure externalist account, Internalist elements are also discussed, especially during the exploration of the different French intellectual tradition.

It is on this issue of the French interpretation of international affairs that the book becomes subtly revisionist. In the English-speaking world IR scholars (despite a scholarly commitment to the global level of analysis) usually unconsciously take an Anglo-centric view of global events. By studying the French debates on policy we become painfully aware of how parochial British and American views of the international history of the period are. Our interpretations of the 1919 Peace, for example, present France as a creator the stiff peace terms that, in turn, led to the Second World War. Seen from a French angle a permanent peace was necessary, but it needed to be based on real security concerns (such as those of France), and that the period of peace, like that of the Allied war effort, would need to be based upon the continued military cooperation of France, the U.S., and the UK. Viewed from this direction, the return to isolation of the United States, not to mention Britain’s relative semi-isolation from Europe after 1920, can be seen as an abandonment of France. Williams concludes that from a French perspective, France, which had been left to rely on capricious and unreliable ‘Anglo-Saxon’ allies, “did badly out of the treaty and even worse out of the war” (92). This is a long way from the standard Anglo view of France as the aggressive and arrogant bully of reparations and the Ruhr occupation.

For me at least, the external event that casts a long shadow over the whole book is the event that marks the end of this volume (and the start of the second planned volume): the events of the ‘annus horribilis’ of 1940

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<sup>1</sup> See Brian Schmidt, *The Political Discourse of Anarchy: A Disciplinary History of International Relations* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1998).

(177ff). By taking 1940 as the cut-off point, rather than the usual 1939, Williams is both emphasising a turning point in French society and its self-perceptions, while at the same time forcing those who study the Anglo-American tradition to rethink our own periodization. While 1940 makes sense as a turning point in the development of French world-views, it also marks a dramatic shift in British policy. While Williams's narrative demonstrates the longer history of the shift from the Entente Cordiale to the Anglo-American special relationship, it is 1940 that marks the shock to the system that saw the final shift from the British reliance on its informal alliance with France for its security, to a trans-Atlantic relationship where Britain was increasingly the junior partner. Thus, Williams's dissection of the troubled three-way relationship provides the underlying intellectual background to the dramatic changes of 1940.

If I were to venture a criticism of the volume, it would not be what it includes, but what is left out. The discussion of the three-way foreign policy relationship is certainly well done (I gather Williams had initially entitled this project '*ménage à trois*,' but the publisher was worried that this might lead to the book being placed in the wrong part of the bookstore). This is also linked back to the international thought of many of the major protagonists. There is a question that is begged here, though. What exactly is the relationship between foreign policy and international thought? Does international thought emerge as a rationalization of foreign policies based mainly on the expediencies of power, or is foreign policy itself a creation of different worldviews, and therefore a product of international theorizing? Is it, as constructivist IR scholars might argue, a subtle interaction between the two? This boils down to the question of whether the peculiar positions of Britain, the United States and France are products of the different power political positions of each nation, or whether there are deeper questions of intellectual temperament behind their divergent views of international affairs. Throughout the book Williams does give us tantalizing glimpses of cases that could point us in either direction. Perhaps, to be fair, Williams is leaving that larger question up to the reader. His intent is, rather, to provide us with some understanding of the difficult *ménage à trois* that framed the foreign policies of the major liberal democratic powers in the last century

There is also a powerful counterfactual 'path not taken' story behind Williams's narrative: the abortive three-way alliance between Britain, the United States and France that, in the wake of the First World War, was seen by many as the basis upon which the fragile peace would be built. Williams quotes the scholar Halford Mackinder in 1943 lamenting the failure to sign the tripartite treaty, "What trouble and sadness that act might have saved!" (13) Yet, the argument of the book also goes a long way in explaining why the treaty was a non-starter. Sometimes the greatest tragedy is not what happens, but what failed to happen. While I am no fan of counterfactual histories, it does strike me that the failure to develop a cohesive Allied response to the problems of peace after 1919 went a long way to dooming the League system. By 1945 the Allies had learnt that lesson, but at great cost

At the end of the day I find it hard not to be entranced by this book. The depth of knowledge, the ability to range over scholarship in both history and IR, and Williams's talent for telling a good story all add up to a fine text. By allowing us to see the Anglo-American tradition of international thought through a French lens, Williams forces us to face many of the false certainties in the British and American accounts of the development of the modern world order. On this account alone the book is subtly subversive. For historians it fleshes out a story, the lessons of which are still not clear. For IR scholars it offers a new perspective on the events that created the contemporary international system. Through it all, like a thread on a string of beads, lies the lesson that to fully understand the development of the global order we need to listen to other voices speaking different languages.

**Review by Justus D. Doenecke, Professor Emeritus, New College of Florida, Sarasota**

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Andrew J. Williams has written full-scale studies on many topics, ranging from British labor's attitude towards Russia in the interwar period to the relationship between liberalism and war during the Cold-War era. This work covers the relationship between the three great Western powers-- France, Britain, and the United States-- from 1900 to 1940; it is the first in a two volume series that will take the narrative through the Reagan administration. In his able analytical treatment, Williams stresses the intellectual perceptions policy makers and theorists of each of the powers had of the other two as well as of the wider world as a whole.

Williams concedes that his explorations into diplomatic climates of opinion are, of necessity, impressionistic, but he conveys what the French call *mentalités* quite well. Given the relative brevity of the text, which is under two hundred pages, the degree of synthesis is quite remarkable. Indeed, by avoiding the temptation of extrapolate at length, Williams gives us a fine, if highly succinct, account.

This volume draws upon extensive archival research in all three countries, including the archives of the British government and the French foreign ministry at the Quai d'Orsay. Consulted American collections include the papers of Franklin Roosevelt, Henry Stimson, Sumner Welles, and Harry Hopkins. The bibliography of books, articles, and published documents is equally comprehensive.

The book begins by discussing how the study of international relations evolved in all three countries, tracing as well the emergence of think tanks and foreign policy establishments. It notes that politics and political thought, including the emerging discipline of international relations in all three states, mirrored the realities of global politics. It then moves quickly to the period immediately before World War I, when-- Williams stresses-- the world's balance of power had already moved across the Atlantic towards the United States. Even before World War I broke out, British and American policy elites envisioned a world order based on liberal imperialism, whereas their French counterparts always stressed traditional power relationships. Even Jean Jaures, the French socialist leader, would have backed the French war effort had he not been assassinated, being a nationalist first and an internationalist second. The British view that the French alliance was a mistake, at the very least a misjudgment, predates the Paris Peace Conference. By the end of the conference, British and American policy elites shared a common faith in international cooperation, one that excluded the French.

To Williams, the 1920s marked the greatest lost opportunity of the century, for Britain and France, great powers for the last time in their history, failed to agree on a common vision for Europe, thereby leaving the way open for American dominance of their own continent. Yet, during the 1920s, the U.S. refused to accept its hegemonic role, which Williams finds to be the major disaster of the interwar period. By 1927, given apprehension over French military strength, the slowly emerging Anglo-American relationship centered as much on a wariness concerning the French as fear of aggression from Germany. The failure of the London Economic Conference in 1933 marked the greatest missed opportunity of the interwar period.

By 1939, Williams write, France became economically, politically, and morally bankrupt. Yet, because of "bonds of history and sentiment" (171), the U.S. felt far more sympathy towards it than towards Britain. At the same time, America realized it could not hold off any assault by a resurgent Germany. The book ends with the fall of France, leading to the antipathy of Charles de Gaulle towards the U.S. and Britain.

There is some presentism, perhaps unavoidable, in this account. Williams sees Wilson's promises of self-determination as having "turned to dust," post-Cold War economic liberalism "leaving a trail of disillusion" (2). "The liberal American dominance" of military and security spheres saps "the faith of both Western and extra-Western populations in the American hegemon and its trusty ally Great Britain." (2-3) Similarly, a "neo-liberal intolerantly free market ideology" dominated discussion of Third-World development for thirty years, "revealing its ineffectiveness to "steel societies against intolerance and war" (190). Far from witnessing Francis Fukuyama's 'end of history,' we are left coming with the violent events of 2001 and the economic collapse of 2007-8, giving us reason to doubt whether the final triumph of liberal values and practices was ever tenable.

Though as a whole, Williams's work is a positive addition to diplomatic history, some of his specific observations can be questioned. To what degree did the Wilsonian vision of self-determination, which Williams sees as such a failure (2), really transcend the old German and Austro-Hungarian empires? Did the American peace movement probably delay U.S. entry into World War I (58), given congressional support for the Hay-Chamberlain and navy bills of 1916 and public support for Wilson's diplomatic challenges to German ship sinkings? Was Lord Lansdowne's peace letter of November 1917 really "bizarre" (66), given the subsequent carnage that ensued by ignoring it? What is "the American Unitary Society" of the Unitarian church? (105) To what degree did Wilson "listen to bankers and munitions magnates" (138) as their group supported his reelection in 1916? One wonders how such American theorists as Hans Morgenthau and Louis J. Halle, so prominent in the 1960s, would have fitted into this study.

There are minor factual errors that a second printing could correct. The names of August Comte (52) and Walter Lippmann (52) are misspelled. Frank Kellogg was not a U.S. Senator in 1928, when he framed the Kellogg-Briand pact, but was Secretary of State (85, 119). Chapter 11 of Colonel E. M. House's *Philip Dru, Administrator* (1912) shows that protagonist Dru did not simply organize a coup against "the hated Republicans" (69) but against an oligarchy that, in House's words, had corrupted both parties. "Charles Eliot" is probably not a "respected American journalist" (73) but president emeritus of Harvard University. "Walter Stresemann" (113) is really Gustav Stresemann. Wilson could not have agreed "to the imposing of reparations and to territorial annexations from the Axis powers" (97), for the Rome-Berlin-Tokyo alliances was based on a series of pacts originating in the mid-1930s. Wilson was elected president in 1916, not 1910 (36). William Borah never chaired the Senate Foreign Relations committee during Franklin D. Roosevelt's presidency (137), for the Democrats always dominated both houses. Roosevelt did not appear personally at the 1933 London Economic Conference (155). French premier Edward Herriot was a Radical, not a Socialist (156). René Massigli was never president of the French Republic; he was deputy political director in the Foreign Ministry. S. Baker should be R.S. (Ray Stannard) Baker (214 fn. 60). The index is woefully inadequate, citing few if any of the historians mentioned in the text.

Despite such errors, Williams has made a real contribution, particularly in his focus on informal policy elites.

**Review by David G. Haglund, Queen's University**

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In light of the importance to the three countries centrally involved in the trilateral relationship embracing the U.S., the UK, and France, as well as to the broader setting of transatlantic and global security affairs over such a considerable portion of the past century, it is surprising to note how little actually has been published about this geopolitical *ménage à trois*. Bookshelves veritably groan under the weight of inquiries, scholarly and otherwise, addressing the respective transatlantic interactions of the U.S. and the UK, and the U.S. and France, and there is no shortage of scholarship on that other bilateral relationship, the one spanning not the Atlantic Ocean but the English Channel. But of the *trilateral* relationship itself, very little has been said, and much less written.

Recent trends in the realm of transatlantic security relations suggest that a reconsideration of the interplay between these three 'old allies' might be in order. Consider that during just the past half-decade, France has 'returned' to the bosom of NATO (in reality, it never did 'leave' the alliance back in 1966, only its integrated military command) and cordiality has been restored to its important bilateral relationship with America, which had become so strained as a result of tensions that had been building since the Cold War's end, to attain their rancorous crescendo with the onset of the Iraq war in 2003. These days, it is not uncommon to find that France under President François Hollande has become the 'go-to' partner when America contemplates the use of force in certain parts of the world, to some analysts even supplanting Britain as Washington's most reliable ally. A few observers even profess to detect the outlines of a different kind of 'security architecture' emerging in the Western alliance, one that bears an uncanny resemblance to the tripartite 'directory' that President Charles de Gaulle wanted, back in 1958, to see NATO become, but which at that moment was simply impossible for Washington to accept, not least because it was in the process of buttressing the Federal Republic of Germany as its essential continental ally.

So Andrew Williams's project could not be timelier. The volume under review in this roundtable covers the era from the turn of the twentieth century to the outbreak of the Second World War, a period of four decades during which the three central parties made halting but incomplete progress towards forging more productive relations among themselves, seeking but ultimately failing to lay the groundwork for the kind of lasting politico-strategic institution that has come to be known as the 'West.' The story he tells is more one of tragedy than of triumph, the protagonists making their transit from animosity to entente during the first decade of the twentieth century, from entente to alliance during the century's second decade, then reverting to animosity and bickering in the decade preceding the Second World War. An important subtext of this first volume, accordingly, becomes that of squandered opportunity, and disastrous consequences.

Williams makes it his business to say why this happened, and in doing so he sometimes finds it difficult to refrain from normative as well as empirical assessment. One gets the impression from reading this book that the French were more sinned against than sinning, and that if only their quondam, 'Anglo-Saxon,' partners had been endowed with greater 'cultural' sensitivity they would have been much better guardians of their own interests, to say nothing of those of the West itself. That is, if they had only been more willing to include France in the great project of building the modern West, rather than keeping it at arm's length from what was too often and too exclusively an Anglo-American construction site, how much better off all would have been. It is an interesting thesis, to say the least, but it raises two important questions.

The first of these concerns the solidity of that mooted Anglo-American community itself. Williams gives every evidence of believing that if the wartime alliance that achieved victory in November 1918 (even though

Washington insisted, somewhat incredibly, that it was not an ‘ally’ but an ‘associate’) had held together in peacetime, a second and even nastier war could have been averted a generation later. This may be so, though we can never know. But Williams also appears to share Harold Nicolson’s view that friction within the Western geostrategic family was primarily a function of cultural divergence, such that if only “the ‘Latin’ and the ‘Anglo-Saxon’ had listened to each other more carefully ... [they could have] avoided 20 disastrous years of mutual incomprehension” (3). Without wishing to deny that there were indeed cultural differences as between the French and the so-called ‘Anglo-Saxon’ powers, and that one might even associate those latter with a certain ‘Anglo-American tradition’ in foreign policy and international relations theory,<sup>1</sup> it still bears emphasizing that relations during the 1930s between Washington and London gave every appearance of being just as dysfunctional as were those between either Washington and Paris or London and Paris, common language and cultural affinities to the contrary notwithstanding.

The second important question concerns liberalism. Here the Williams thesis seems to reverse itself. Rather than stress cultural divergences and all their imputed, pernicious, consequences, the author draws our attention to the possibility that it might well have been *convergence* rather than its opposite that is so noteworthy an aspect of the tale he weaves. “The three states that are at the centre of the discussion in this book,” Williams writes, “were the great liberal states, and understanding of that liberal culture and how it has developed in the cauldron of international politics since 1900 is essential for understanding why the ‘West’ has proved to be hegemonic not just militarily and economically but also ideologically ...” (16).

Liberalism, like any other political concept worth its salt, is going to be both a contested and a slippery term. Williams does not really essay any working definition of the concept, noting instead, correctly, that its meaning is subject to debate. Still, it might have helped if he had tried to show exactly what political values of the three states are so pregnant with *liberal* signification. It is well known that the word, liberal, does not travel comfortably when it crosses the Atlantic. In certain parts of the U.S., for instance, to be a liberal is to be considered close to being a heretic, a dangerous socialist in the imagination of more than a few denizens of ‘Red State’ America. By contrast, in France it is a daring, and some would say foolhardy, political figure who would self-identify as a liberal. What in America is often a term of derision used to criticize a centre-left perspective, in France becomes an epithet hurled at those considered socially and ideologically deviant, meaning they are running dogs of free-market capitalism, to the extent that even *right-wing* populists have been known to join forces with left-wing critics in lustily denouncing liberalism – or even worse, ‘neoliberalism’ (whatever the latter is supposed to mean).<sup>2</sup>

Admittedly, there have been prominent French political theorists associated with the liberal corpus; one thinks, in this regard, of Alexis de Tocqueville, Benjamin Constant, and some other figures as Jean-Baptiste Say, Claude Frédéric Bastiat, Gustave de Molinari, and Edmund Silberner – the latter quartet being invoked by Williams (188-89) to establish the bona fides of the French contribution to liberal thinking in the transatlantic world. And there surely have been moments when it was both possible and necessary to style the French political culture as being steeped in liberalism, notably the period of the July Monarchy (1830–

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<sup>1</sup> See Arnold Wolfers and Laurence W. Martin, eds., *The Anglo-American Tradition in Foreign Affairs: Readings from Thomas More to Woodrow Wilson* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1956).

<sup>2</sup> And in France, there does not necessarily have to be anything particularly *new* about ‘neo-liberalism.’ See Gaëtan Pirou, *Néo-libéralisme, néo-corporatisme, néo-socialisme* (Paris: Gallimard, 1939).

48). But for the most part, liberalism would not be the noun of choice to apply to French governance practices, not even excluding those of the ‘long’ Third Republic, whose core political values – its “*idéologie de base*,” to use Michel Winock’s term – betrayed far more affinities with corporatism than with liberalism.<sup>3</sup>

It would hardly be inaccurate or an injustice to classify Williams as a Francophile, and while it might seem that those who dare to profess a fondness for France in the UK are a rare species, the reality is probably otherwise; the urge to tease their cross-Channel neighbors may be a constant temptation, one not so easily resisted on the part of the English. If it is such, however, it is more than matched by their willingness, nay zeal, to flock to France at the first opportunity. Still, it can be said (not, I hasten to add, in a condemnatory fashion) that Williams’s analysis conveys a certain Gaullist flavor. Consider what he tells us on page 172, on which it is maintained that “France was largely excluded from the key debates about the future of the globe until 1945. The ‘New World Order’ proclaimed by [Franklin D.] Roosevelt, Joseph Stalin and Winston Churchill in 1944-45 conspicuously excluded the only French leader left standing, General Charles de Gaulle.” Is this really the case, though?

It certainly seems to be as close to a geopolitical truism as can possibly be imagined, insofar as many in France are concerned (and certainly de Gaulle believed it to be so). But recent scholarship on the February 1945 Yalta conference between the Big Three of Roosevelt, Stalin, and Churchill reveals a picture at variance with the ‘Yalta myth’ so embedded in the French collective psyche. For sure, neither the American nor the Soviet leader was feeling much love for de Gaulle in early 1945. Roosevelt was rightly considered to have been hostile to de Gaulle though not to France; and Stalin considered both the country and its provisional president to be geopolitical lightweights, hardly worth deferring to. But Churchill made it a core objective to get France reinstated as a member of the great-power club, an enterprise at which he succeeded admirably, despite Soviet opposition.<sup>4</sup>

There is much to like in Williams’ book, and a great deal to ponder. There are also, unfortunately, a series of factual and other irregularities that mar the narrative, and it is to be fervently hoped that the second volume will be more closely policed for such idiosyncrasies than the first appears to have been. Some of the problems relate to judgments that deserve to be contested, or at the very least contextualized; others are simply misstatements of reality, often of a chronological nature. In the former category, we find Williams’s subscription to the claim (30) that Kaiser Wilhelm II was Queen Victoria’s favorite grandchild. The Kaiser certainly thought this to be so, but the Queen disagreed, which accounts for her failure to have invited him either to her Diamond Jubilee in 1897 or her 80<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration two years later. As she put it to a political adviser, her grandson was a “hot-headed, conceited, and wrong-headed young man.”<sup>5</sup> More significantly, almost astoundingly, is Williams’ assertion (33) that it was Victor Hugo who penned a devastating open letter in the pages of *L’Aurore* in mid-January 1898, bearing the title “*J’accuse*” and

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<sup>3</sup> Michel Winock, *La France politique: XIX<sup>e</sup>-XX<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Paris: Seuil, 1999), 14.

<sup>4</sup> See S. M. Plokhy, *Yalta: The Price of Peace* (New York: Viking, 2010).

<sup>5</sup> Quoted in David Fromkin, *Europe’s Last Summer: Who Started the Great War in 1914?* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2004), 45.

denouncing the French government for its persecution of Captain Alfred Dreyfus. The author was, of course, Émile Zola, Hugo by this time having been reposing in his grave for more than a dozen years.

Electoral chronology, America's in particular, is also problematic in the book. On pages 71-72 he has Woodrow Wilson being elected president in 1913, as a result of a split in the Republican party, yet on page 92 the year of Wilson's elevation to the White House is given as 1910, a misstatement repeated on page 136. Wilson, of course, came to the presidency as a result of his victory in November 1912, over Theodore Roosevelt (running on the Progressive ticket), William Howard Taft (the Republican incumbent), and Eugene V. Debs (the nominee of the Socialist party).<sup>6</sup> In a similar vein, Wilson's incapacitation in 1919 is said (109) to have preceded rather than followed the Republicans' gaining control of the Senate, which happened not in 1919 as Williams tells us but in November 1918. It was precisely because Wilson had failed to persuade Americans to vote for Democrats in that autumn's Senatorial races that he felt obliged, in a last-ditch effort to ensure the upper house's ratification of the Versailles treaty (within which was embedded his cherished League of Nations), to go on that cross-country speaking tour in September 1919 – a tour that was to take such a heavy toll on his health, virtually removing him as a functioning chief executive thereafter.

In closing, I cannot help but note with some good humor one error. On page 145 Williams tells us, perhaps correctly, that toward the latter half of the interwar period there developed a growing Canadian role in the bilateral Anglo-American relationship – a role that indeed many in Canada professed both to want and to detect at the time, when it was fashionable to imagine that Canada could serve as linchpin in the transatlantic community, enabling closer and more productive relations between the world's two great English-speaking powers, with all that this would portend for the future of global stability. Thus it was with great interest, and no little surprise, that I read (128) Williams' analysis of a summit meeting between British and American leaders, said to have taken place in October 1929 in "Rapidan, Canada." Now, Canada is a big place, second only to Russia in landmass, and it is possible that somewhere in the Great White North there *is* a Rapidan. But the site of the meeting between Britain's Prime Minister, Ramsay MacDonald, and America's president, Herbert Hoover, was assuredly in the United States, precisely at the latter's rural retreat, Rapidan Camp, nestled in Virginia's Shenandoah Valley.

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<sup>6</sup> James Chace, *1912: Wilson, Roosevelt, Taft & Debs – the Election that Changed the Country* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2004).

**Author's Response by Andrew J. Williams, University of St. Andrews**

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I would like to thank the three reviewers for their interesting and insightful comments, indeed I cannot ever thank them enough. I took great comfort from their evident enthusiasm for my ambitious project, and experienced some embarrassment when I realized that I had made the odd howler. What most pleased me was that they all agree that we need (for differing reasons) to 'bring the French back in' with more emphasis into the historical debate on the history of world order making. Like many, I feel a deep dissatisfaction with the 'Anglo-Saxon' hegemony which reigns within the history and practice of international relations (IR), a hegemony which has tended to warp our collective view of the world and maybe even to contribute to our blinkered actions when we deal with problems within it. The French (and many other peoples) have voices from the past and present that need to be incorporated into our collective thinking about the international. I hope my modest contribution will start, or help to further, a new appraisal of French contributions to IR as well as encouraging similar ambitions in other scholars.

My ambition to attempt a synthesis of what is usually divided into different categories of intellectual action within IR studies is well expressed by the first reviewer, Lucian Ashworth. I willingly concede that we have often discussed how the study of IR can incorporate both international history (IH) and the history of international thought (IHT) and in some ways this book is my reply to that question. As he implicitly points out, it is difficult enough to combine the insights of IH and IHT for one country (and we have always discussed Britain) and here I am trying to do the same trick with three. The triangulation is not simple, and I agonized about how to do it from page 1. I think he has it absolutely right that I see France as the "dissenting voice" in the Anglo-American relationship that created the contemporary global order. As I stated in the book, and Ashworth notes, the best analogy was that of the French *maitresse* in the often unhappy Anglo-American marriage, a kind of *ménage à trois*. This book is a deliberate provocation of the received wisdom of the 'Special Relationship' between the United States and Britain and I am glad that it is seen in that light.

Justus Doenecke has also been an inspiration from the outset, although he may not realize it or even remember our first meeting in a library in Princeton back in about 1996 when I was researching my earlier book, *Failed Imagination?*<sup>1</sup> He sums up many of the major episodes in my book very well and I have no quarrel with his views on my approach. I was particularly gratified by his positive emphasis on my concentration on the 'informal policy elites.' I acknowledge his correction of my many and manifold sins and wickedness in the proof-reading, many of which were through enforced haste, as well as work and family pressures. My mistake of (only once, I think) citing 'Gustav' for 'Walter' Stresemann was particularly to the point, and my only excuse was that I knew 'Walter,' Gustav's grandson I believe, in my Geneva Ph.D. days. The index is entirely my fault, as I did it myself. Doenecke is also very correct about how much I managed to squeeze in to the measly 200 and so pages, which is all that I was allowed by Palgrave Macmillan. They were very easy to work with except for their initial attempt to make me take the tale from 1900 to 1990 or even 2003 (!) I take Doenecke's words as further encouragement to maybe conclude the next volume of my story with 1975, though that will put me in the position of needing a Volume 3, up to 1990 or 2003.

Maybe where I somewhat disagree with Doenecke is about President Woodrow Wilson. I started out a fan and I have become progressively (no pun intended) disillusioned. I tend to agree more and more with

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<sup>1</sup> Andrew J. Williams, *Failed Imagination: New World Orders of the Twentieth Century*, Manchester University Press, 1998 (2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 2007).

Secretary of State Robert Lansing on the issues of self-determination and even on the League of Nations. The important issue was to keep the ‘Americans in’ which might have done much to assure the security of the world, assuage French fears, and much besides. The French were driven to despair by what they perceived as British *hauteur* and American indifference. Both were to pay for that after 1945 in particular, as I am now writing.

David Haglund was another inspiration for this project, though his writing and general presence in the academic world, especially through his writing on France. I very much like his summary of the volume as one of “squandered opportunity, and disastrous consequences.” He is right that I do occasionally (though not more than that I hope) let my normative values peek out from under my empirical assessment. I persist in thinking that the refusal to fully acknowledge the French and their original voice in world politics has severely weakened the West, particularly in the 1930s when unity was at its most essential. He is of course right that the United States and Britain were also having one of their periodic near ‘divorce’ experiences. On ‘liberalism,’ I tried to go more lightly on that theme than I did in my last book *Liberalism and War*<sup>2</sup> and probably over-shot, or missed the wicket, as a Brit would see it. It is a vast and interesting theme. The problem with such exercises as this book is that of knowing how much to emphasize one’s previous obsessions. The accusation that I am a “Gaullist” is shrewd, and probably correct, and I share Haglund’s belief that Charles de Gaulle was as much to blame for the Yalta myth as anyone. I will develop that idea more in the next volume. The General almost certainly wanted to be rejected by the ‘Anglo-Saxons’ since it gave him greater standing in the eyes of a humiliated French population. He had to react to 1940 by being more than his own man. That becomes even more obvious in the way that he willfully annoyed successive post-1958 American presidents, while often captivating many Americans that he met (but fewer Brits). Churchill understood him best, maybe because both were outsiders in their own countries. I am now agonizing about how much of de Gaulle’s considerable contribution to thinking about nations and their armies (such as *Le Fil de l’épée*, 1932) to include in the next volume, since his thinking is as, or more, significant as that of Jean Jaurès and his *L’Armée nouvelle* (1911).<sup>3</sup>

On getting Victor Hugo and Emile Zola mixed up, I can but hold up my hands and surrender. Ditto for thinking Rapidan was in Canada, though that was a genuine error, not a proof-reading mistake. I was recently taken out by some American friends to be ‘shot’ at Concorde for the sins of my British forefathers and I now realize just how much I deserve my punishment. Luckily for me this time round they only used an iPhone.

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<sup>2</sup> Andrew J. Williams, *Liberalism and War: The Victors and the Vanquished*, London, Routledge, 2006.

<sup>3</sup> Charles de Gaulle, *Le Fil de l’épée*, Paris, Perrin, 2010 (1932); Jean Jaurès, *L’Armée Nouvelle*, Paris: Editions Sociales, 1915 and Paris: Editions 10/18, 1962.