

branches, in the long perspective of history. Our authors fail to provide this. They ignore the story of how congressional isolationism nearly crippled President Roosevelt's correct and critical effort to resist Hitler. Nor, to cite another obvious example, do they mention the malignant effects of Senator McCarthy on the conduct of American foreign affairs. Lacking the historical long view, they remain traumatized by the anti-war version of the Vietnam experience, which the boatpeople, glasnost, and the demand for freedom in Eastern Europe should have utterly discredited. Their legalistic prescriptions would divert the proper focus of the enduring and necessary foreign policy debate away from the realm of politics, where it belongs, to the courts of law, where it does not.

POWER AND PREJUDICE: THE POLITICS AND DIPLOMACY OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION. By Paul Gordon Lauren.¹ Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press. 1988. Pp. xv, 388. Cloth \$50.50; paper, \$19.95.

*Mary L. Dudziak*²

Professor Paul Gordon Lauren takes on an ambitious task: an examination of the importance of race and racism in international politics and diplomacy, particularly in the twentieth century. The result is a well written and carefully researched study of the impact of racial ideologies and racist practices on world events.

Although at times he paints with a rather broad brush, discussing major political and ideological developments with great brevity, the strength of Professor Lauren's book is that it brings so many different pieces together. We can view *Plessy v. Ferguson*, for example, not only in the context of American racism in the 1890s, from lynching to the massacre at Wounded Knee, but also in the context of European racial theories, and of efforts to promote white supremacy in Australia and Canada through restrictive immigration laws. By adopting this comparative perspective, Lauren is able to isolate factors that he believes influenced policies on race.

The book begins with an historical overview of white racism, from the assumptions of racial inequality held by Aristotle and Saint Augustine to the "scientific" racism of the nineteenth century. Ideas about racial differences had profound consequences when

1. Professor and Director of the Maureen and Mike Mansfield Center, University of Montana.

2. Professor of Law, University of Iowa.

they were used as moral justifications for slavery and colonialism. Aristotle wrote of "a physical difference between the body of the freeman and that of the slave." To him it was "clear that just as some are by nature free, so others are by nature slaves, and for these latter the condition of slavery is both beneficial and just." Holding similar ideas about the inequality of non-white peoples, Spanish and Portuguese leaders in the fifteenth century had no compunctions about dividing up and dominating the world they had "discovered."

According to Lauren, "it was not that white Europeans held the only attitudes about racial prejudice in the world, but that they possessed sufficient power for conquest to make others suffer accordingly." This power was then widely used for profit in the capture of black Africans for the slave trade. For Lauren, "[o]ne of the most fateful features of this entire development was the fact that by the seventeenth century, Europeans and Africans met each other in the distorted context of slavery." The asymmetrical relationship of master and slave reinforced the notion of racial differences, which was then used, by philosophers, government leaders and others, to justify treating slaves as less than human.

The ideology of the American and French revolutions fueled a growing abolitionist movement in the eighteenth century. However, the American Constitution enabled slavery to continue. The French abolished colonial slavery, only to have it reinstated by Napoleon. According to Lauren, with Napoleon's defeat in 1815 and a restructuring of European power, came an opportunity to act against slavery. He views a subsequent Congress of Vienna agreement limiting slavery as illustrative of the central theme of his book: "All major international attempts to reduce racial discrimination and promote human rights . . . have come in the wake of wars and revolution. Upheaval and chaos, particularly if accompanied by significant shifts in power, provide the opportunity for reassessment and change." The American civil war further illustrates Lauren's point. He argues that emancipation "require[d] this kind of upheaval."

Throughout his treatment of the historical background of racism, Lauren relies heavily on other scholars, providing a helpful synthesis of important aspects of the literature. It is when he turns his attention to the twentieth century that Lauren relies more heavily on original research in primary sources.

In his discussion of the twentieth century, Lauren focuses more on attempts to forge international agreements promoting racial equality than on domestic developments in particular nations. For example, he provides a very interesting discussion of the importance

of race at the Paris Peace Conference following World War I. W.E.B. DuBois organized the first Pan-African Congress to coincide with the Peace Conference. The Pan-African Congress attempted to bring together representatives from African countries and from countries with racial discrimination. Although many nations, including the U.S. and England, barred their citizens or persons from their African colonies from attending, the Congress convened in February 1919, and called for racial equality and self-determination for those under colonial rule.

Peace Conference delegates could ignore the Pan-African Congress, since it had no formal role in international negotiations, but they could not ignore the Japanese delegation, for Japan was one of the victors of World War I. The Japanese were greatly offended by severe immigration restrictions imposed on Asians by the United States, Canada and Australia, California laws segregating Japanese school children and forbidding Japanese nationals from owning property, and other forms of discrimination abroad. Consequently, the Japanese pushed for recognition of the principle of racial equality in the Covenant for the League of Nations. The U.S., Britain and Australia would have none of it. The notion of racial equality undermined the justification for colonial rule in Africa and Asia, and embodiment of the concept in an international agreement might give an international body control over domestic abuses such as American racial segregation. The measure on racial equality became a matter of great controversy at the Conference. Although this statement was not included, largely due to the efforts of President Woodrow Wilson, it focused international attention on a subject that would be central to twentieth century diplomacy.

A major transition in international policies on race occurred in the aftermath of World War II. The source of postwar change, according to Lauren, lay in shifting ideologies and changing relations of power. Revulsion at Nazi atrocities focused attention on racial justice. It led many to question whether certain Allied nations were hypocritical. As Mohandas Gandhi of India wrote to President Franklin Roosevelt, "the Allied declaration that [they] are fighting to make the world safe for freedom of the individual and for democracy sounds hollow, so long as India and, for that matter, Africa are exploited by Great Britain, and America has the Negro problem in her own home." Following the war, nations committed themselves to the principle of human rights in the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, although they were careful to maintain domestic control over their own human rights abuses. On a more concrete level, European nations loosened control over their

colonies, and many Asian and African nations eventually gained independence. Some important advances occurred in the U.S. as the Truman administration desegregated the military and forbade racial discrimination in federal hiring, while the Supreme Court dismantled the legal basis for segregation.

The U.S. found itself in an embarrassing position after the war, as other nations wondered how we could demand free elections in Eastern Europe, yet deny thousands of African-Americans the right to vote at home. Throughout the world, newspaper coverage of racial incidents in the American South posed the question of what U.S. democracy meant if it tolerated lynching and segregation. The Soviet Union exploited this weakness, using the race issue prominently in anti-U.S. propaganda. As an emerging world leader, the U.S. cared, at this point, about what other peoples thought of the country, and, in particular, whether "our system" was perceived as superior to communism. Accordingly, "[t]he external pressure from the Cold War now began to play a monumental role in creating a new beginning for human equality in U.S. politics."

African-Americans, including A. Philip Randolph and W.E.B. DuBois, effectively used U.S. embarrassment over this international criticism to push their civil rights agenda at home. In 1947, DuBois filed a petition in the U.N. on behalf of the NAACP entitled "An Appeal to the World: A Statement on the Denial of Human Rights to Minorities in the Case of Citizens of Negro Descent in the United States of America and An Appeal to the United Nations for Redress."³ In DuBois's words, the purpose of the Appeal was "to induce the nations of the world to persuade this nation to be just to its own people." Although the U.N. declined to take up the petition, it received widespread publicity around the world. Such international attention given to civil rights abuses in the U.S. helped to induce our government to act on racial problems at home.⁴

Throughout this volume, Lauren presents powerful evidence of the importance of race to international relations. When he asserts

3. Lauren does not discuss petitions protesting American racial discrimination filed by two other groups. See *The First Petition to the United Nations from the Afro-American People*, in H. AP THEKER, *AFRO-AMERICAN HISTORY: THE MODERN ERA 301-11* (1971) (petition filed by the National Negro Congress); CIVIL RIGHTS CONGRESS, *WE CHARGE GENOCIDE: THE HISTORIC PETITION TO THE UNITED NATIONS FOR RELIEF FROM A CRIME OF THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT AGAINST THE NEGRO PEOPLE* (2d ed. 1970). Although the effectiveness of the National Negro Congress petition is unclear, the Civil Rights Congress's 1951 petition claiming that the U.S. had committed genocide against African-Americans received widespread international attention. See G. HORNE, *COMMUNIST FRONT?: THE CIVIL RIGHTS CONGRESS, 1946-1956*, at 169-74 (1988).

4. This theme is developed in Dudziak, *Desegregation as a Cold War Imperative*, 41 *STAN. L. REV.* 61 (1988).

the primacy of race, however, he does so without close analysis of other factors and without fully justifying his conclusions about the power of race as a force in history. For example, in the footnotes Professor Lauren acknowledges the literature that argues that European and U.S. imperialism was motivated by an effort to expand markets, and that capitalism was its driving force.⁵ Citing the racially oriented justifications offered for conquering and controlling people of color in Africa, Asia and Latin America, Lauren convincingly argues that race was a critically important factor. The centrality of race, however, does not negate the importance of other factors, such as economics. By viewing them together, we might better understand their interplay.⁶

A related problem concerns the way power is discussed as a causal variable in the book. Although power is central for Lauren, it remains a slippery concept. It is at times equated with economic or military might. It seems to be a quality associated only with governments. Accordingly, the role played by popular movements in achieving change is unclear. Lauren recognizes that "in matters relating to human rights, individuals and governments are usually on opposite sides of the ring. In such matters, governments usually move when and only when they are forced to do so."⁷ But the book does not convey a clear sense of how governments can be forced to act, or how a minority group achieves sufficient power to have its interests met.

Because, in this account, power seems to reside in governments, not in groups or individuals, when governments respond to the concerns of a group of people, it seems to be out of a moral commitment to their ideas, not because of an exercise of power by the group. This is the second part of Lauren's title; power *and* prejudice determine the course of action. When there is a lack of prejudice, or a developing moral sensibility, he seems to suggest that that is an independent motivating force. In upheavals following international conflict, "the reassessments and reflections brought about by upheaval in turn produced actions heavily influenced by an overwhelming sense of moral conviction and responsibility for the values of freedom, justice, and respect for all regardless of their race." As Derrick Bell has taught us, those in positions of power tend to change their posture on matters of race when they perceive it to be

5. His reference in the notes is to W. WILLIAMS, *THE TRAGEDY OF AMERICAN DIPLOMACY* (1962 ed.). See Lauren, p. 307, n. 83.

6. In legal literature, an interesting recent discussion of race and socioeconomic class as analytical categories in scholarship on civil rights appears in Ansley, *Stirring the Ashes: Race, Class and the Future of Civil Rights Scholarship*, 74 *CORNELL L. REV.* 993 (1989).

7. Quoting J. HUMPHREY, *HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE UNITED NATIONS* 13 (1983).

in their interest to do so.⁸ One way that a convergence of interests comes about between government officials and people of color seeking change is when a group makes it more difficult for those in power to continue the status quo. When the NAACP and other groups and individuals brought international attention to bear on American racism, they did not simply make the nation more aware of the contradictions between racism and the ideology of American democracy. They used this American weakness in an exercise of power.

Ideology, or moral sensibility, is certainly an important component of social change, as are relations of power. However, in order to understand the relative importance of these variables, we must understand more about how they operate as causal factors. As Steven Lukes has suggested, "any given conception of power will necessarily incorporate a theory of that to which it is attributed: to identify the power of an individual, or a class, or a social system, one must, consciously or unconsciously, have a theory of the nature—that is the causal powers—of individuals, classes, or social systems."⁹ Power and prejudice are central to Lauren's analysis, yet the locus of power, the nature of power, and the interplay between power and ideology are all implicit, and, as a result, unclear. Lauren's insights are very helpful, particularly his identification of power shifts following international conflict as the most productive times for reforms in race relations. The way he handles the concept of power, however, makes the book less than completely satisfactory analytically. A fuller understanding of the nature of power would clarify why it is that certain nations happened to win and some to lose in particular struggles over international policy. It might also illuminate more fully the way the struggles of ordinary people contribute to social change.

Notwithstanding the shortcomings of this volume—and any ambitious work is certain to have weak points for reviewers to ponder—*Power and Prejudice* remains a valuable treatment of race in international politics. It may be of particular use to scholars of American civil rights law, for whom a view beyond this nation's borders may provide valuable insights about law and social change at home.

8. Bell, *Brown v. Board of Education and the Interest-Convergence Dilemma*, 93 HARV. L. REV. 518 (1980), reprinted in D. BELL, *SHADES OF BROWN: NEW PERSPECTIVES ON SCHOOL DESEGREGATION* (1980).

9. Lukes, *Power and Authority*, in *A HISTORY OF SOCIOLOGICAL ANALYSIS* 635 (T. Bottomore and R. Nisbet eds. 1978).