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The Royal Navy and the Palestine Patrol (review)

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can difficulties, Soviet intransigence, and bitter Korean political rivalries.

The level of original contribution by the four Korean authors varies, but ends with accumulated insight. Choi Sang-yong reviews the postwar trusteeship issue as an expression of American anticolonialism. No Korean, however, will admit that Korea could not have governed itself without a fratricidal civil war, whether the Russians and Americans came to disarm the Japanese or not, and Choi is no exception. However, he is careful to show how nationalist political leaders (of whom Syngman Rhee is the only one familiar to Americans) could make the antitrusteeship position a rallying point for opposition to the USAMGIK and the U.S.-U.S.S.R. Joint Commission (1946–47). Jeon Sang Sook's essay examines the effort to create a Left-Right Coalition movement in 1946, led by Kim Kyu-sik and Yo Un-hyong, that would stop political polarization in the American zone. Bonnie Oh continues this investigation in "Kim Kyu-sik and the Coalition Effort," the book's best essay. Park Chan-pyo investigates the USAMGIK's "Koreanization" in 1946–47 and discovers American and Korean progressive reformers hard at work to give at least South Korea responsible, effective government, not just anti-Communism as a substitute for democracy.

However important, *Korea Under the American Military Government* does not provide a full picture of occupied Korea. There is no discussion of law-and-order issues and the high level of postwar violence, including the Autumn Harvest Uprising (October-November 1946). Although American military and diplomatic records (the dominant source for all the essays) are packed with incident reports, there is no discussion of terrorism, smuggling, counterfeiting, black marketeering, street violence, and police corruption. No author deals with the role of nonofficial Americans like the missionary community or the issue of the political preference afforded English-speaking American-educated Korean Christians of whom Syngman Rhee was the least favorite. Although I do not favor the high level of conspiracy theory that characterizes Korean political history, these essays make a strong case that personalism shaped postwar South Korea as well as North Korea. Professor Oh's volume should encourage others to return to the primary sources in our search for the real Korea after World War II.

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The Royal Navy and the Palestine Patrol. By Ninian Stewart. ISBN 0-7146-8243-3. Portland, Oreg.: Frank Cass, 2002. Photographs. Appendixes. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Pp. xvi, 217. \$25.00.

Few post-World War II peacetime naval assignments were as difficult as that given the Royal Navy off the Palestinian coast from 1945 until Britain withdrew from the Palestinian mandate in 1948. Thousands of desperate

holocaust survivors attempted to escape from Europe to Palestine; they had not only the support of much of world public opinion (though not that of the Arabs), but also the backing of the United Nations and its Relief and Rehabilitation Authority (UNRRA) and a number of European governments, including France and Italy. The Royal Navy, for its part, was struggling to maintain a worldwide presence at a time of serious cutbacks in both ships and men, which made the task no easier.

Ninian Stewart prepared this study as an official Naval Staff History in 1996 essentially as a fiftieth anniversary commemoration; this is the first such compilation to be made available immediately for public consumption. Though the book reads like the official document it is, it is fascinating nevertheless in its detail. There was nothing simple about the Navy's task of intercepting immigrants defined by Britain as illegal. Refugee ships sometimes organized very spirited resistance to boarding, which required the use of firearms, tear gas, and other persuaders; lives were sometimes lost as a result. Conditions aboard the immigrant ships were commonly horrible, the passengers desperate for food, water, and medical aid. Zionist organizations on shore did their best to sabotage British vessels in the main port of Haifa, and constant vigilance was essential. Legal difficulties made it necessary for the most part to stop immigrant ships only when they were within the three-mile limit, which was seldom easy. Numbers could be daunting; the immigrant ships *Pan Crescent* and *Pan York*, sailing in December 1947, carried between them over 15,000 immigrants, and when they were diverted to Cyprus, they were escorted by a force that included two cruisers, two destroyers, and two frigates. But overall, Stewart makes a persuasive case that Royal Navy personnel showed extraordinary restraint, and the animosities generated at the time seem generally to have been short-lived.

Without doubt the most famous episode of the Patrol was the arrest of the SS *President Warfield*, better known to the world as *Exodus 1947*, whose 4,554 immigrants were "arrested" only after fighting off boarding attempts by five destroyers for some hours. This case attracted such attention because Britain attempted to apply a policy of *refoulement*, i.e., sending the immigrants back to their country of origin, which in this case was designated as the British occupied zone of Germany, of all places. That policy soon went overboard, but the damage to Britain's reputation was done. It is possible to wish for more discussion in this book of policy decisions on high, and to fault some sections for a certain naiveté regarding "well-meant efforts to hold the balance of fair play between Arab and Jew" (p. 37) which take little account of the imperial interests dictating Britain's Palestine policy in those years. Still, it is a valuable study which for the first time relates the British Navy's side of this particularly controversial peacetime naval operation.

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