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Book Review of "Shrub: The Short but Happy Political Life of George W. Bush" by Molly Ivers and Lou Dubose

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SOCIAL SCIENCES

changing the Soviet Union from the "evil empire" to a modern capitalistic state. Caution: the lengthy, complicated discussions on SDI technology and missile diplomacy are not for the casual reader. Highly recommended for academic and specialized collections on foreign policy and strongly recommended for larger public libraries.—*Karl Helicher, Upper Merion Twp. Lib., King of Prussia, PA*

Gregor, A. James. **The Faces of Janus: Marxism and Fascism in the Twentieth Century.**

Yale Univ. 2000. 232p. permanent paper. index. ISBN 0-300-07827-7. \$30.

POL SCI

The Roman god Janus represents beginnings and endings, the gateway to all knowledge. Gregor (political science, Univ. of California, Berkeley; *Phoenix: Fascism in Our Time*), who has written extensively on fascism, takes issue with 20th-century historians who make fascism and communism the opposing faces of Janus. OCLC WorldCat indicates the availability of over 600 works on fascism in the 1990s, but Gregor is the first to use Marxist theory systematically to bend the political spectrum from a linear to a circular form. That is, fascism and communism meld into each other. Fascism had its origins in communism, and communism exhibited facets of fascism from its inception. Since the Soviet empire broke up, its logical course is toward fascism. The real political spectrum Gregor sees is democratic and nondemocratic: "The fact is that what is now spoken of as 'communofascism' and 'Stalinofascism' serves as testimony to affinities long recognized by those who have refused to place the revolutions of the twentieth century on a continuum from Left to Right." Gregor uses the repetition of key points to convince his audience but uses subtle changes in each new chapter to move his argument forward in small increments. Recommended for all political science collections, this book supplements *The Black Book of Communism* (LJ 11/1/99).—*Harry V. Willems, Southeast Kansas Lib. Syst., Iola*

Ivins, Molly & Lou Dubose.

Shrub: The Short but Happy Political Life of George W. Bush.

Random. 2000. c.179p. permanent paper. ISBN 0-375-50399-4. \$19.95.

POLITICS

George W. Bush, or "Dubya," gets skillfully skewered by political writer/humorist Ivins in this devastating, funny, and highly informative political biography of a leading Republican contender for President. Ivins, with journalist Dubose, presents the embarrassing story of how Dubya avoided the draft and service in Vietnam (with the help of his father's influential friends), his many failed ventures in the oil business (only to be repeatedly bailed out by his fa-

ther's influential friends), and his dubious activities as part owner of the Texas Rangers baseball team (where once again his father's influential friends helped out) and offers a fairly detailed account of his short tenure as governor of Texas (a state with a weak governor system). Ivins makes Dubya look like the dim afterglow of his more accomplished father, though she does concede that Dubya is an excellent fund raiser and a good campaigner. This biting political biography is well written, witty, engaging, biased, and important. It cuts deep into the flesh of the man who might be the next president of the United States. As such, it is an important book for citizens and pundits alike. [Previewed in Prepub Alert, LJ 10/15/99; the first serial went to *Time*.]—*Michael A. Genovese, Loyola Marymount Univ., Los Angeles*

Karmel, Solomon M. **China and the People's Liberation Army: Great Power or Struggling Developing State?**

St. Martin's. Apr. 2000. c.240p. bibliog. index. LC 99-40510. ISBN 0-312-22389-7. \$49.95.

INT AFFAIRS

This book follows established methods of military analysis to demonstrate that China's greatest threat to world peace is its poorly managed military bureaucracy. Karmel (London Sch. of Economics) uses China's public pronouncements, as well as internal documents, to assess the modernization of the Chinese military. He concludes that the army, in particular, needs a major overhaul. Karmel predicts that Chinese leader Jiang Zeming will be unable to stabilize the military sector or to alter Mao's conception of a People's Army that blends military and civilian functions. Karmel also presents, but does not expand upon, the idea that military generals and business managers have different webs of loyalty and that, as a result, military-run businesses are startlingly unsuccessful. However, his discussion of China's defense budget and military expenditures is well developed. Karmel's military analysis reaches a conclusion similar to that of Andrew J. Nathan and Robert S. Ross in *The Great Wall and the Empty Fortress: China's Search for Security* (LJ 7/97)—that China is unlikely to be an aggressive force in Asia soon. Recommended for military studies collections.—*Peggy Spitzer Christoff, Oak Park, IL*

Kirp, David L. **Almost Home: America's Love-Hate Relationship with Community.**

Princeton Univ. Apr. 2000. c.338p. permanent paper. index. ISBN 0-691-04973-4. \$22.95.

POLITICS

Almost Home is almost a book, but not quite. Kirp (public policy, Univ. of California, Berkeley; *Our Town: Race, Housing, and the Soul of Suburbia*) combines evocatively written magazine essays into a

lackluster volume. These vignettes tell of people ostracized for being different, towns divided by race or class, and schools in crisis. They read well individually but lack a discernible unifying theme. Kirp's introduction and epilog mention in passing the dual nature of community ties—they may bind individuals together or restrict personal expression. However, the author does not provide an overarching analysis to link these disparate stories into a meaningful discussion of the American experience of community. Conceivably useful to those interested in the craft of essay writing; otherwise, not recommended.—*Duncan Stewart, State Historical Society of Iowa Lib., Iowa City*

Lieberman, Joseph I. with Michael D'Orso. **In Praise of Public Life.**

S. & S. 2000. c.176p. index. ISBN 0-684-86774-5. \$21.

POLITICS

In this short volume, U.S. Senator Joseph I. Lieberman (D-CT), chair of the influential Democratic Leadership Council (the moderate "third way" movement in the Democratic Party), has attempted to reclaim the moral high ground for public service. Aware of the rise of citizen contempt for public officials and voters' well-known cynicism about politics in general, Lieberman nonetheless attempts to inject a mainstream moral sensitivity into the public arena in hopes of both cleaning up the political process and drawing disaffected voters back into the fold. But his book is less a study of these advertised themes than a conventional political biography, focusing on Lieberman's political career. However, Lieberman does make some valuable points, and in his conclusion, he returns to the theme of the value of public service, offering some important reform proposals. For all public libraries. [Previewed in Prepub Alert, LJ 10/15/99.]—*Michael A. Genovese, Loyola Marymount Univ., Los Angeles*

Psychology

Bernstein, Jane. **Bereft: A Sister's Story.**

North Point: Farrar. Apr. 2000. c.240p. ISBN 0-86547-586-5. \$22.

PSYCH

Here, Bernstein tackles a very personal issue: the murder of her older sister, Laura, in Tempe, AZ, in 1966 when Bernstein was 17 years old. The author of *Loving Rachel*, an account of raising her handicapped daughter, Bernstein spent more than 20 years researching this memoir. Besides speaking at two hearings for the murderer's release from prison, Bernstein interviewed defense attorneys and detectives and met the murderer's father. Her tone, however, is so informal that readers will often forget that they are reading non-fiction. This emotional narrative is indeed