

John Krige, *American Hegemony and the Postwar Reconstruction of Science in Europe*, Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 376p., ISBN: 978-0-262-11297-0, \$23pb \$40 hb.

Cold War History, 9(3), 2009

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Hegemony, like empire, is a word that tends to get used a lot in Diplomatic History and International Relations circles without the benefit of a precise definition. The assumption behind this usage is often that a clear power imbalance is present, permeating all areas of activity. Rarely are they used in relation to an international actor other than the United States. In this context, a strict designation as to how this power imbalance may play out in practice over time is not considered that important. However, some of the most interesting and revealing work in the field of Cold War history over the past decade or two has exactly focused on how hegemony is worked out in practice – the hows, whys, and wheres involved in the construction and maintenance of US hegemony following WW II. Much of this has also clarified not just the extent of US power, but also its *limits*. John Krige's latest book is a valuable addition to this growing library, in terms of its theoretical astuteness, analytical subtlety, and the merging of the big picture with the personal detail.

Since 1999 Krige has been at the vanguard of research into the linkages between (US) power and (European) scientific endeavour following 1945. Science equalled progress, modernisation, and the developing of new capabilities in all areas. *American Hegemony* takes the essential elements of several separate but interlinked narratives and weaves them expertly together into a coherent whole from the late 1940s to the early 1960s, maintaining all along a clear message as to what the conclusions can be drawn. For Krige, hegemony must be understood as 'consensual' and it must be regarded as a coproduction, indicating that the rebuilding of scientific infrastructure, capabilities, and networks after WW II was as much a European as an American cause. One of the main spoils of war for the Americans was the opportunity to re-shape socio-economic relations across Western Europe. Also, the U.S. military and major foundations had most of the money and the institutional back-up, allowing them to define priorities and propel agendas. Krige carefully charts the impact this had on the development of CERN (European Organisation for Nuclear Research), CNRS (Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique), and the expanding activities of key figures in the post-war scientific firmament such as Niels Bohr. The book rounds the story off with two *failed* attempts at hegemony: the attempts to establish a European version of MIT and to strengthen Operations Research within the European university system. The conclusion provides a very useful summing up of the common themes involved in each case, and how we might consider the different layers of hegemony when applying this concept to specific cases.

This book provides excellent insights into the many-sided realities and vagaries of U.S. power. Self-interest was involved in the attempt by the U.S. to re-model the European socio-economic landscape, but general interest was certainly behind the desire to raise European capacities, and the two paths are always intertwined. Anti-communism demanded a strong Western alliance, firstly for stability, ultimately for burden-sharing. Rhetorically this was not a problem – institutionally there would often be resistance to the imposition of a U.S. blueprint. There were plenty of powerful allies in Europe who merged their (national) interests with those of the United States, but they were generally only willing to commit themselves to projects that worked through existing organisations and methods. Generating support for new made-in-the-USA initiatives that did not connect with local interests, however well-funded they may be, were unlikely to gain ground.