

and to issue more signing statements than any of his predecessors), Pfiffner finds that President Bush set a dangerous precedent. That he was able to do these things, and do them with so little protest from the legislative and judicial branches of government, is highly troubling.

To set President Bush's actions within their historical context, Pfiffner begins his book with a chapter on the development of the theory of the legitimacy of executive power (from Machiavelli to Locke), a chapter on the development of individual rights in Great Britain (from Magna Carta to the Glorious Revolution) and another on the framing of the US Constitution and the intention of its framers. Each of the subsequent chapters dealing with one of the aforementioned decisions begins with the establishment of more historical context, and the reader soon begins to question Pfiffner's style. As interesting as the deep background is, the conclusions Pfiffner reaches about Bush's transgressions could easily have been understood without much of the preceding text. One finds an over-reliance on the historical narrative, without which Pfiffner would probably have been unable to turn his study into a book.

Nevertheless, in arguing that President Bush showed monarchical traits in his subversion of the competing branches of government, and in the thoroughly shocking case studies and examples that he utilises to shore up his argument, Pfiffner bestows on the reader a real appreciation for the unprecedented actions of the Bush administration: an appreciation that is only possible with the benefit of hindsight. The quote attributed to Benjamin Franklin that Pfiffner chooses to top one of his chapters is indicative of the warning that the book aims to issue: 'They that can give up essential liberty to obtain a little temporary safety deserve neither liberty nor safety' (p. 168).

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Passion and Preferences: William Jennings Bryan and the 1896 Democratic National Convention by Richard Franklin Bense. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008. 318pp., £17.99, ISBN 978 0 521 71762 5

Passion and Preferences is both a fascinating and a frustrating book to work through. Taking as its sub-

ject the Democratic National Convention of 1896, it details the division between those delegates who supported a switch in monetary policy to the adoption of the silver currency, and those who staunchly supported the retention of the gold standard. What at first sounds like an irrelevant and forgotten platform debate, to which an observer of modern American politics cannot relate, quickly becomes of interest thanks to Richard Bense's skill in piecing together the narratives of five daily newspapers and the accounts of multiple contemporaries into a richly descriptive narrative. One comes to understand the content and context of a nineteenth-century election campaign which could have been unmemorable were it not for the writings of the three times unsuccessful Democratic nominee, William Jennings Bryan.

What is frustrating about the book is that the enjoyable historical narrative is interrupted by Bense's theoretical endeavour. Bense seeks to explain how Bryan, an unlikely presidential nominee at the outset of the Convention, captured the passion that the majority of delegates felt for the adoption of silver, and converted it into a preference for his candidacy over that of any others. While such grander theories as those of ritualistic behaviour and the influence of one's surroundings on one's decisions are intriguing, Bense's application of them often serves to overcomplicate matters. Does the reaction of a state delegation to the entrance into the convention hall of a favourite-son candidate, for example, really need to be treated in theoretical terms? I believe that the book would have been more successful had Bense's secondary objective (i.e. the telling of the story of the 1896 Convention) been his first. I do thank Professor Bense, however, for introducing me to an era of Democratic party history that I have not found covered extensively elsewhere.

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Goddess of the Market: Ayn Rand and the American Right by Jennifer Burns. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009. 384pp., £16.99, ISBN 978 0195324877

In an obituary for Ayn Rand (1905–82), American conservative William Buckley mischievously predicted:

'Ayn Rand is dead. So, incidentally, is the philosophy she sought to launch dead' (p. 279). He could not have been more wrong. In 2009 an edition of *The Economist* from 26 February showed how sales of Rand's *opus magnum*, *Atlas Shrugged* (1957), rose with each new economic intervention announced by the Obama administration. In addition, the story of the woman behind the legendary novel is being told in two new monographs, namely *Ayn Rand and the World She Made* by journalist Anne Heller, and *Goddess of the Market* by historian Jennifer Burns, reviewed here. Both books should be read by anyone interested in Ayn Rand and both are, thanks to their lucid style and the captivating subject, a pleasure to read.

Goddess of the Market could be subtitled as an intellectual biography, for it does obey the conventions of the genre and focuses on the development of Rand's ideas, their context, sources and eventual impact. Divided into four parts, Burns first examines Rand's childhood in pre-revolutionary Russia, her beginnings as an extra in Hollywood, and completion of *The Fountainhead* (1943). With this work, which is the story of an architect who refused to succumb to the conventions of his trade and a celebration of the creative mind, Rand set the foundations of her later fame. As a consequence, in the second part Burns shows how Rand grew from a 'simple' writer to be a novelist and philosopher who assembled an ever growing number of admirers around her. Burns demonstrates how this circle not only learned from Rand, but how Rand herself profited from adherents like Alan Greenspan, not least when drafting her main work, *Atlas Shrugged*. In the third part the reader gets to see Rand both at the height of her popularity and confronted with the demise of her circle. The book closes with a dissection of Rand's impact on libertarian thought, and her persistence in popular culture and, ultimately, in the American mind. As an aid for anyone further interested in Rand, Burns has also appended a helpful essay on sources, which – together with the book as a whole – will hopefully inspire further critical research on Rand's intellectual legacy. Burns has already received a lot of praise for her book, and deservedly so.

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Choosing to Lead: Understanding Congressional Foreign Policy Entrepreneurs by **Ralph G. Carter and James M. Scott**. Durham NC: Duke University Press, 2009. 294pp., £15.99, ISBN 978 0 8223 4503 9

In *Choosing to Lead* the authors explore foreign policy innovations employed by congressional entrepreneurs. In the age of an 'imperial presidency' such actions are often ignored, overshadowed or even co-opted by the president. However, Ralph Carter and James Scott assert that legislators have increasingly attempted to shape foreign affairs since the Second World War. Instead of merely taking positions on executive policy outlines or critiquing them, entrepreneurs develop new ideas in order to express their personal policy preferences or to fill a vacuum exposed by current events.

Compiling congressional activity from the CQ Weekly Report, instances of innovative activity are tracked throughout the post-war years: the Cold War Consensus period (1946–67), the Cold War Dis-sensus period (1968–89), the post-Cold War period (1990–2000) and the post-9/11 period from 2001 (p. 53). Consequently, the authors' research shows that the party opposite the president is most likely to engage in policy innovation, especially if it is in the majority in Congress. These initiatives run counter to Richard Fenno's explanation that congressmen are actors solely seeking re-election, since foreign policy formation does not directly result in such an outcome. One explanation may be the possibility for a legislator to obtain increased influence within the halls of Congress through the design and implementation of new policy, and therefore procure benefits for his constituents. Or, as in the case of Representative Weldon and his attempt to obtain funding for military aircraft to be built in his district (p. 226), direct monetary benefits could be appropriated to the district.

Adding depth to the analysis, detailed case studies – mostly of senators – demonstrate foreign policy innovation efforts on the part of individual politicians throughout their careers in Congress. Particularly moving are the descriptions of the different approaches by Senators Fulbright and Helms, which subsequently represent two distinct strategies for legislators to follow. Insider incrementalists attempt to work behind the scenes to influence the president to change the