

including the tension between stimulating the economy in the short-term and eliminating structural deficits in the long-term; the need to properly regulate the financial sector at both national and global levels; and even the need for the study of economics to be balanced by familiarity with history and the humanities. But by bravely pushing ahead, he helps make the case that despite a 35-year ebb tide in influence, the ideas of Keynes are once again extremely relevant in a debate that is yet to be resolved.

When all is said and done, Professor Skidelsky has delivered an elegantly written, authoritative, and provocative commentary that reinforces Keynes's assertion about the power of ideas. All those who have a rudimentary familiarity with economic and financial concepts and an interest in current affairs will find value in this book.

America's Captives: Treatment of POWs from the Revolutionary War to the War on Terror. By Paul J. Springer. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2010. 278 pages. \$34.95. **Reviewed by Major William M. Yund,** former Assistant Professor, Department of History, US Military Academy.

The abuse of Iraqi prisoners at Abu Ghraib prison in the early phase of the American occupation did tremendous damage to US strategic interests. It eroded domestic and international support for American operations and facilitated insurgent efforts. In *America's Captives: Treatment of POWs from the Revolutionary War to the War on Terror*, historian Paul Springer argues that although such treatment was not the result of deliberate policy it was nonetheless the foreseeable product of American attitudes toward enemy prisoners of war (POWs). While representing a clear departure from America's long-standing policy of faithfulness to international law regarding POWs, the abuse of these detainees was the "predictable, and to a certain extent natural, outgrowth of American wartime behavior." Springer suggests that American POW policy over the last two centuries has been characterized by the failure to properly plan for POW operations, a casual neglect of prisoners, and constant economizing in the realm of prisoner care. Prisoner welfare has periodically suffered for it.

Organized chronologically, the book compares POW policy with practice throughout the nation's history instead of focusing on an individual war, providing a new perspective on the subject. Springer finds that the administration of captives was generally decentralized and uncoordinated prior to the Civil War. Enemy prisoners were subject to constantly changing policies that were often ignored by the individuals tasked with performing them. Policy-makers economically instrumentalized prisoners while professing humanitarian concerns. Captives were frequently handed over to civilian contractors more interested in turning a profit than in the welfare of their wards. By the time of the Mexican-American War, Springer argues, POW operations that seemed to be based on humanitarian principles actually reflected a pragmatism superseding expressed national values. Although the vast neglect of prisoners on both sides of the American Civil War and the wartime development of a framework for governing the treatment of POWs, the Lieber Code, left a lasting impression on the military establishment, moral flexibility continued to dominate operations. The exploitation of prisoner labor by American forces, for example, actually increased after the armistice ending the First World War was signed. Moreover, in the months following the end of hostilities, prisoners were subject to extremely dangerous work conditions. And while

more planning was devoted to the problem of enemy captives after 1865, potentially ameliorating poor conditions, the War Department did not issue a manual standardizing prisoner treatment until 1944.

Prisoner of war policy during Korea and Vietnam changed in two key ways, but expediency continued to be the paramount concern. First, prisoners became instruments of propaganda instead of being utilized for their labor value. Second, American policy-makers shifted responsibility for maintaining POWs to allied nations. Doing so was particularly detrimental to America's moral authority. Springer debunks the myth that the United States forced the South Vietnamese government to strictly adhere to the Geneva Convention in its treatment of prisoners. Instead, he argues that the US government knew that prisoners in South Vietnamese custody were not being treated in accordance with humanitarian norms but took no corrective action. In turning a blind eye, the United States not only demonstrated the cynicism that continued to exist within American POW policy but also violated treaty obligations.

Springer's work raises a number of questions for further study. Throughout *America's Captives*, he touches on the difficulties of applying laws of warfare to guerrilla conflicts and illustrates that prisoner treatment practices varied according to the enemy. Racially dissimilar enemies and alien cultures fared poorly. "The distinction between civilized and savage warfare," the author notes, "is important to any discussion of American POW policy and practice." Americans from the colonial period onward did not restrain their treatment of prisoners when the enemy failed to follow accepted rules and traditions of war. The implications of this distinction bear further consideration in the light of America's increasing engagement outside of Western Europe. Similarly, the use of US captives as propaganda tools for mobilizing American society for war would be a valuable avenue of investigation. While taking note of labor unions' resistance to the use of prisoner labor during World War II, Springer misses an opportunity to analyze other effects the presence of enemy captives had on the American home front. It might also be instructive to examine whether the new approach to handling enemy prisoners which crystallized during Vietnam was linked to the changing relationship between the military and American society.

Clearly written and convincingly argued, *America's Captives* expertly combines individual anecdotes with a sweeping narrative while simultaneously offering insightful analysis of the topic. It is useful reading for both the soldier and the scholar. Dr. Springer's review of the field of POW literature will be especially helpful to the general reader, while the historical patterns and lost opportunities he reveals are particularly relevant for leaders. By illuminating unchanging principles that have guided America's POW operations as well as important turning points in the nation's relationship with its captives, Springer helps to demonstrate subconscious assumptions that make up an underexamined element of military culture. Whether or not a result of official policy, inhumane treatment of POWs today hands the enemy a victory by weakening domestic support for the nation's war effort. Echoing recent critiques of military culture which suggest that military institutions often paradoxically contribute to national weakness by focusing on the operational art without regard to larger political considerations, *America's Captives* eloquently reminds us to incorporate awareness of the past into future planning.