donnish wit that coyly connects Claire Luce’s emotional defense of Chiang’s China with the Christian doctrine of Original Sin, because of her earlier conversion to Catholicism. Ouch!) And he is a bit hard on Harry’s oddly prophetic 1941 essay on the American Century, urging his fellow citizens “to exert upon the world the full impact of our influence” (p. 35). Is that not what we are trying to do today, in one way or the other?

Quibbles aside, Professor Jespersen has written a useful and knowledgeable book, illuminating some past history that deserves to be remembered. Next time around, he might want to consider the distorted images we raised of Maoist China two decades later, when a new generation of trusting American China-watchers bumbled approvingly over Mao’s “moral crusade”—we are constantly searching for some moral explanation for China’s leadership vagaries. This was at the height of the infamous Cultural Revolution. It was only later—a decade later—that we learned from Deng Xiaoping and his cohorts the horror story of killing, torture, and mob rule in the name of Mao that had been going on under their noses.

Even now, as we look at China’s kaleidoscope of soaring urban living standards, inland poverty, economic ventrurism, political corruption, and police cruelties, the images remain shifting and contradictory. And for Americans, media transmission remains a key factor. The television reporting of the Tianamen massacre in 1989, one can argue, had a great effect on American public opinion—over a single week—than twenty years of Harry Luce’s print editorializing. Yet, almost another decade later, we are still trying to get it right. The human rights activist’s view of life in the People’s Republic today is about as far apart from the big businessman’s perspective as Harry Luce’s was from Teddy White’s.

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This volume of eleven essays grew out of a fiftieth anniversary symposium on Pearl Harbor, sponsored by the Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt Institute, held at Hofstra University on 7 December 1991. The charge to scholars was to consider Pearl Harbor and its implications from “unconventional, oblique, or eccentric angles” (p. vii). Among the topics covered are the Royal Navy and the Japanese threat, Soviet historiography on the Pacific War, the diplomatic and strategic backdrops to Pearl Harbor, Japanese wartime rhetoric, FDR as Commander in Chief, and a detailed examination of the events of Saturday, 7 December 1941. Researched primarily from U.S. and European sources, the essays by British and American historians vary in depth, breadth, and quality. The volume does fulfill its revisionist intentions.

G. A. H. Gordon’s intriguing piece on the Royal Navy, for example, resurrects the charge by James Rusbridger and Eric Nave (in Betrayal at Pearl
Harbor) that the British knew in advance about the attack on Hawaii. Citing his own interviews with British intelligence officers, he argues that the Royal Navy had indeed cracked the Japanese Navy’s JN-25 code and had sent the Americans a warning about Pearl Harbor that had “somehow not gotten through” (p. 31). Because signals intelligence enabled Admiral Tom Phillips to locate the main Japanese convoy in the Gulf of Siam on 8–9 December 1941, Japanese aircraft might not have sunk the Repulse and Prince of Wales had Phillips continued north and engaged Admiral Kurita’s eight-inch gun cruisers in night battle with superior radar. Gordon assigns highest blame for Britain’s overall debacle in Asia on Winston Churchill’s preoccupation with the Mediterranean, condescension toward the Dominions, contempt for Japan, and perhaps the thought that “only a losing battle there could convincingly demonstrate need of help” (p. 32) from the United States.

Other scholars are even more critical of FDR. Roosevelt’s disdain for Japan, his “misplaced faith in the power of economic sanctions” (p. 42), dilatory rearmament, and diplomatic negotiations with Tokyo without meaningful concessions spelled disaster for Washington, according to Frederick W. Marks III. Viewing Japan as the “Prussians of the Far East, and just as drunk with their dream of dominion” (p. 44), the president ignored the putative merits of Japanese expansion, wherein Marks depicts Tokyo’s support for Manchurian and Mongolian separatism as legitimate, akin to an Asian Monroe Doctrine, and not at all detrimental to U.S. trading interests. In light of Japanese undeclared war against China, he claims that Japan was “really doing nothing more when she occupied Indochina, Hainan, and the Spratley Islands than the United States ... did” (p. 46) in taking over Greenland and Iceland. Although diplomatic negotiations, including the Hull-Nomura talks, invariably produced “a recurring sequence of positive feelers on the part of Washington followed by retraction and withdrawal” (p. 47), FDR hesitated to balance risks with sufficient power. Enthusiastic isolationist support in 1940 for military and naval rearmament meant that Roosevelt’s failure to mobilize earlier was self-inflicted and created “a widespread perception of American weakness. Japan struck at Pearl Harbor because she thought she could get away with it” (p. 39). Preparedness, in short, might have prevented a Pacific War.

Stephen E. Ambrose likewise castigates the failure to rearm, contrasting America’s single combat-ready division in May 1941 with Germany’s 208 and Japan’s 100 divisions. “Never in human history has the preparedness gap between potential enemies been greater, he writes (p. 97). FDR arguably courted catastrophe by not providing substantial help to Axis opponents until it was nearly too late. What would the president have done if Japan had attacked British and Dutch but not U.S. territory in 1941? His promises to the British notwithstanding, persuading Congress to declare war in defense of European empires would not have been easy. Since Roosevelt hoped to avoid war in the Pacific while concentrating against Hitler, Ambrose calls that policy “a dismal failure” as of 10 December 1941 because he “was not involved in the war he had been determined to enter, against Germany, but was involved in the war he had been determined to put off until later, against Japan” (p.