Reserve Board warnings to American bankers about the risks entailed in accepting British treasury notes, while the latter chapter shrewdly analyzes British shipping and the losses to be expected from either unrestricted German underseas warfare or by attacks on armed vessels. The final chapter, "Wilson Brought to War," repeats the story of Wilson's agony of indecision in regard to the diplomatic rupture with Berlin and the decision to request a declaration of war against Germany from Congress. The Zimmermann Telegram story also is related, against the backdrop of a crisis in British finance only rescued by America's timely war entry.

Finally, the author declares, Wilson chose war rather than submission to Germany's underseas campaign because of his ideals, and above all because of the fact that his hoped-for new world order to supplant the present one was threatened. In summary, the price the president essayed for the roles to be played by the United States and himself left no choice but war entry, and he paid it.

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In 1972 Herbert S. Parmet's Eisenhower and the American Crusades made use of personal and official papers from the Eisenhower administration — as well as twenty-five interviews with associates of the president — to demolish the notion that Eisenhower served as some sort of benign facade for an official Washington dominated by Secretary of State John Foster Dulles and presidential assistant Sherman Adams. Eisenhower was not only "merely necessary," as Parmet and others have pointed out, he was in charge.

Charles Alexander, professor of history at Ohio University, generally follows this theme in Holding the Line: The Eisenhower Era, 1952-1961. Moreover, he does so in a shorter volume that even more effectively than Parmet's rehabilitates the Eisenhower presidency.

In seven chapters Alexander covers the domestic and diplomatic issues that characterized the Eisenhower years. The author judiciously interprets the McCarthy miasma, the civil rights movement, and other domestic concerns. However, the book emphasizes foreign
policy, as did Eisenhower himself, discussing Cold War conflicts from Korea to the U-2 fiasco and the collapse of the summit conference in 1960. Eisenhower continued the Truman policy of containment, and although his administration suffered disappointments and reverses, he succeeded in keeping America out of shooting wars.

While most of the book is arranged chronologically, a provocative and lengthy chapter midway through the volume is arranged topically. Here Alexander, who has written excellent books on social and intellectual history, describes the economic, aesthetic, social, and racial state of the union in the 1950s. Although many lamented the blandness of the period, a general consensus of American objectives indicated a satisfied (and even smug) people's approval of the president, reflected by an electoral majority in 1956 even greater than that of 1952.

Alexander posits the basic thesis that even though the unpretentious and amiable Eisenhower "was not one to inspire his countrymen to try for the unattainable," he did "serve them with a degree of common sense not generally displayed . . . in the years since World War II." Further, Eisenhower, only the third professional soldier to go directly from military service to the White House, was the "only real peacetime president since 1945," and more than any of his successors "held down the seemingly insatiable appetite of the military establishment for money and hardware." In January 1961, when America's oldest president greeted the youngest ever elected, the former's popularity among the American people was almost as great as it had been eight years before. And rightly so, Alexander concludes, because Eisenhower's "holding the line," far from appearing in retrospect as a time of drift and stagnation, looks better and better compared to the "agonies and excesses" of the years since.

True, Eisenhower was "obviously what America wanted" in the fifties, a father figure in whom the people were willing to invest their fortunes, their future, and their votes. However, Alexander's contention that Eisenhower dominated his time as much as Jackson and the two Roosevelts dominated theirs is difficult to accept. Eisenhower's popularity may have rested in part upon the proposition that his leadership precluded those intrusions imposed upon the people by more active and colorful presidents. Since most Americans believed in Eisenhower's ability to promote prosperity and to continue the Cold War while maintaining the peace, perhaps he did not need particularly to bother them about it.

Interesting, well-written, and useful for the general reader as well as for the serious student of American history, this volume contains
instead of specific documentation, an excellent bibliographic essay which enhances the book's value for those who wish to further their understanding of the Eisenhower years.

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Diener's book is within the tradition of historical debunking, more recently described as demythologizing. He prefers the simpler term, "reinterpreting." Whatever description is applied, the purpose of the historian is to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth about the historical past, so that students of history will be delivered from illusion and ignorance.

On page 10 Diener writes: "One purpose of this book is to demythologize United States history, to shed light on America's blunders and immoral deeds so that a more realistic chronicle of America may emerge. Here are recounted the mistakes, trickery and hatred which at times have directed America's destiny. While frankly debunking, I also attempt to shed new light on modern problems by tracing their development through U.S. history: racism, cruel exploitation of the Indian, violence and war, American imperialism and American poverty. The reader is no longer allowed the illusion that these are new problems but is confronted by the fact that America has always been possessed by these devils."

Diener's book is "offered as a remedy to such ignorance." The ignorance he addresses himself to includes many aspects of American history, but especially the history of America in regard to poverty, racism, and violence (p. 10).

Diener defines his audience on page 11: "This book is aimed at a broad readership. The book was written primarily for interested laymen, for those who, adult and young adult, want a fuller knowledge of the American heritage than the traditional education affords. Yet at the same time it is compact enough to allow a person to familiarize himself with revised interpretations of American history without delving into voluminous and difficult scholarly works. Ideally, Reinterpreting American History will also be used by college and high