
This latest biography of General George Catlett Marshall has a number of merits. It deals in a single volume with a long, rich, and varied career. While reflecting the justified admiration of the author for his subject, it does not idolize him and harshly criticizes his roles in the Pearl Harbor fiasco and the postwar mission to China. The book brings out facts not hitherto revealed that supposedly "humanize" Marshall, and it is highly readable.

With this, the book contains serious flaws. It is replete with factual errors — many are trivial, some egregious, but others substantively significant. Although many of these could be dismissed as merely sloppy writing of no importance to the general reader, their number is so vast as to reflect extremely haphazard research, casting doubt on the validity of the work as a whole. The fault is compounded by Mosley's propensity for using direct quotations from unnamed individuals, with the only documentation being end notes broadly summarizing the sources for each chapter. Versions of major events such as the 1914-1916 Mexican border episodes and of interpersonal relationships of key figures in the Marshall story are garbled to the point of being hopelessly misleading. Even the well-known animosity of Douglas MacArthur toward Marshall is mishandled in part, its origin attributed to an association which never existed. Speculations about motives and attitudes are presented as assertions. In some cases, chronology is blithely disregarded, permitting events to be described as causes of other events of which they were actually the effects. Most of the "new" facts are at best material for minor anecdotes and at worst petty gossip. The one exception concerns Marshall's first marriage. If indeed it was celibate, as Mosley repeatedly hints, it might explain Marshall's "workaholic" nature as a junior officer. Even so obvious a connection, however, is ignored.

In view of the monumental and definitive nature of Forrest Pogue's study of General Marshall, to be completed with a forthcoming third volume, there seems little justification for another book on the subject, unless a single-volume biography is considered desirable. If that is called for, Marshall deserves better than this.

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