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Author

Hall, Mitchell K.

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us that O'Neill has not avoided the moralizing of earlier historians, but only recast their heroes and villains.

Judy Kutulas
University of California
Los Angeles

JFK: The Presidency of John F. Kennedy. By HERBERT S. PARMET. New York: Dial Press, 1983. Pp. vii + 407. Notes, index. \$19.95.

In the years immediately following the death of John F. Kennedy, his reputation reached almost legendary proportions, aided in part by flattering accounts of his presidency written by administration insiders. In more recent years critics have subjected his term in office to stinging analysis, accusing him of raising national expectations but failing to deliver concrete results. Now, twenty years after his assassination in Dallas on November 22, 1963, Herbert S. Parmet has written the first balanced, scholarly treatment of the Kennedy administration. In *JFK: The Presidency of John F. Kennedy*, a sequel to his 1980 book, *Jack: The Struggles of John F. Kennedy*, the author forever does away with the Camelot mythology while remaining sympathetic with what Kennedy was trying to do.

Parmet cites an impressive array of sources, including materials at the John F. Kennedy Library and nearly all relevant secondary works. He does a fine job of exposing some of the government's inner workings, of revealing the sometimes tenuous control a president has even within his own administration, and in explaining how political factors can subtly influence presidential decisions. The author also delves into Kennedy's personal life: his relationship with his brother Bobby, the continual struggle with physical problems, his ability to remain cool in the midst of crisis, and his marital infidelity.

Parmet observes that Kennedy was not always politically astute. He had a tendency, particularly on domestic issues, to remain aloof from Congress and to leave the essential legwork to others. Kennedy particularly received much credit for the advances in civil rights during his administration, yet much of the movement's strength grew from the belief that Kennedy would support it with the full weight of the federal government. Initially, Kennedy was not aggressive in supporting civil rights. For several months he delayed issuing an executive order for open housing, did not push for legislation fearing that it would keep Congress from acting on other issues, and frequently waited for violence to erupt

before involving the executive branch. Eventually the president did provide direction from the White House and the Kennedy Justice Department went far beyond the Eisenhower administration in enforcing existing legislation and court orders. Kennedy-appointed federal judges sometimes played key roles in breaking down segregation and discrimination, and an extensive civil rights bill was introduced that passed after his death. Kennedy did not lead the civil rights movement but was pushed along by it.

In foreign affairs, Kennedy faced one crisis after another, but Parmet generally gives him a negative rating in diplomacy. In spite of its high popularity, the Bay of Pigs incident is portrayed as a complete failure. The Alliance for Progress produced few changes in Latin America, and Parmet speculates that had Kennedy lived, he would probably have remained committed in Vietnam. JFK is given high praise, however, for the nuclear test ban treaty as an important first step in reducing both the nuclear arms race and cold war tensions.

In a brief epilogue, Parmet portrays Kennedy as a president whose willingness to demonstrate toughness in foreign relations helped to create potential disasters around the globe. His verdict on domestic matters is also harsh. To this assessment, however, Parmet adds some perspective:

“If Kennedy was a ‘cold warrior’, who was not in his day? ...His American University speech and the test ban treaty were bold moves for those cold-war years. ...The face that he put on the national purpose through such programs as the Peace Corps and the Alliance for Progress, whatever their limitations, was at least consistent with the idealism much of the world preferred to associate with America” (p.354).

Parmet's fine book provides us with a new place to start in examining the controversial legacy of President John F. Kennedy.

Mitchell K. Hall
University of Kentucky

The Kingdom of Leon-Castilla Under Queen Urraca, 1109-1126. By BERNARD F. REILLY. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982. Pp. xx + 401. Bibliography, illustrations, maps, notes, index. \$32.50.

In this work Bernard Reilly investigates the seventeen year reign of Queen Urraca of Leon-Castile, and presents us with the first major biography of the first woman to rule a Spanish kingdom. Traditionally,