

Historia

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Symposium speakers, L to R, Allen Douglas, Fedwa Malti-Douglas, Roy Mottahedeh, Barbara Daly Metcalf, and Stephen Humphreys

Dept Hosts Symposium on Islamic Government

By J. Sears McGee

How were comic strips employed by Saddam Hussein to maintain and strengthen his hold on power in Iraq and his influence in the Islamic world generally? How does the popular, worldwide *tablighi* movement among Muslims deal with the role of governments? What comparisons can be made between such Western revolutions as the American and the French with the Iranian Revolutions? These were among the questions discussed at a symposium on "Legitimacy and Revolution in Islamic Government" at UCSB on Monday, November 4. The King Abdul Aziz ibn Saud Professor of History and Islamic Studies, R. Stephen Humphreys, organized and chaired the event.

Speakers at the symposium were Fedwa Malti-Douglas (professor of Arabic and comparative literature, University of Texas at Austin), Allen Douglas (lecturer in French and Middle Eastern studies, UT-Austin), Barbara Daly Metcalf (professor of South Asian history and history department chair, UC Davis) and Roy Mottahedeh (professor of Islamic history, Harvard). In his introductory remarks to the audience of over 100, Humphreys described the visiting scholars as "the best there are" in their respective fields. The central issue, he said, "was the struggle of the regimes of the Islamic world to win legitimacy."

(Please see ISLAM, p. 5)

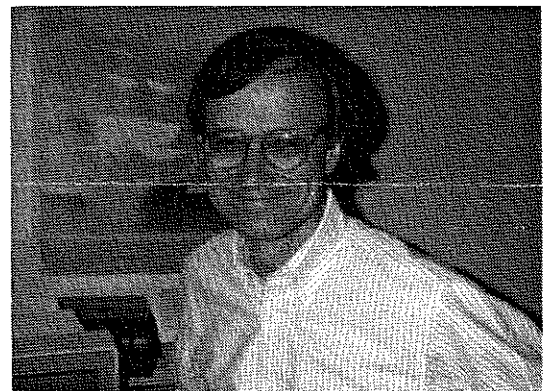
Submarines and the Pacific War

By Joseph Finnigan

December 7, 1991, marks the 50th anniversary of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor which sent the US into WW II. For much of this past half century, scholars have studied the role played by various military forces on both sides of that long struggle. Once such subject, the origins of the US decision to wage unrestricted submarine warfare against Japan is the theme of the UCSB History Associates November 20 luncheon-lecture.

The speaker, UCSB History Professor Jack E. Talbott, will talk on "Pearl Harbor, Submarines, and the Pacific War." In his speech Professor Talbot—who teaches courses in the History of Modern Europe—will challenge what he says was the accepted notion that "the declaration of unrestricted warfare against Japan was an act of reprisal for the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor." Actually, the decision he says, "was the outcome of long arranged considerations, among them being strategic war planning, weapons development and national security policy over the two decades between the world wars."

Right after the first world war, army and



*Prof. JACK TALBOTT
...luncheon speaker*

navy planners turned to the question of how to fight a war against Japan, figuring possibly that Japan would be a next enemy. Weapons designers, who had among them naval officers who closely watched the German submarine success against Britain in WW I, pushed for

(Please see TALBOTT, p. 4)

Food, Architecture and Neighborhoods

(Ed. Note: While spending a year at the Annenberg Research Institute working on a new book, Professor Drake has graciously consented to periodically report to the readers of Historía on his experiences in and around Philadelphia)

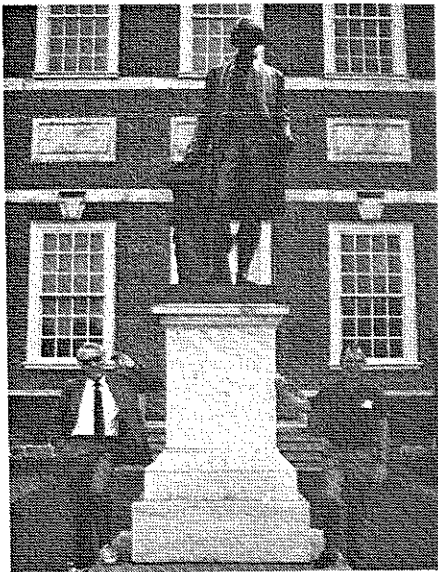
By Hal Drake

I recall reading many years ago a piece written for the alumni magazine by Otis Graham about his sabbatical. The alumni had wanted to know what a professor did on a sabbatical, and Otis had replied with his customary eloquence.

I forget which damned award-winning book he was working on at the time. What I do remember is a paragraph in which he discussed what he did on those days when the thoughts just weren't there, and the words didn't flow.

"I worked on my backhand," he wrote.

I don't have a backhand, or a forehand for that matter, since I don't engage in tennis or any other healthful pursuit. But I do have plenty of



Prof. Drake and unidentified Philadelphia street urchin.



*Prof. Harold Drake
...home away from home*

those days when I find myself wondering if this book ever will be written, or even should be.

On those days, I find the stimuli of my new environment both soothing and refreshing.

When I accepted the Annenberg Research Institute's generous offer to work in Philadelphia for a year, all I knew about this city was that it had been the butt of some of W. C. Fields' most memorable jokes.

I expected to find a city of urban blight and congestion. But "Philly," as the natives call it, has proved to be a delightful contrast to its image; officially bankrupt, it is one of the richest environments I have ever lived in, with parks and museums, rivers and theaters to break up the high-rise landscape.

The Annenberg is housed in a new building—it turned three last August, shortly after we arrived—in the city's historic district. My office is one block from Independence Square, which I walk through every day after a 30-minute commute from

Germantown, where we are living because it is close to my daughter's school.

I had expected that the crowds at Independence Hall and the Liberty Bell would begin to taper after Labor Day, but even though Fall is now well advanced the stream of tour buses bringing pilgrims from all over the world shows no signs of diminishing.

I wish I could say I find this proximity to the birthplace of the Declaration of Independence thrilling. The truth is, it has rapidly become just part of the environment.

What I do find thrilling are:

- The buildings. The tiny red brick colonials with their white stone facings and blue doors and shutters nestled comfortably against colonnaded monoliths in classical style that in turn abut other buildings done in weddingcake baroque. Across the street from the Annenberg is the still-imposing facade of the Second Bank of the United States; a glance to the right reveals the Port Authority Building—if it wasn't used for the original "Ghostbusters" it should have been. To an eye accustomed to the homogeneity of Santa Barbara's suburban Spanish style, this variety is a source of constant surprise and pleasure.

- The markets. There's the Italian market on 9th street—an open-air affair

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Historía

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From the Chair

"The heaviest element known to science was recently discovered The element, tentatively named Administratium, has no protons or electrons and thus an atomic number of Ø. However, it does have one neutron, 125 assistant neutrons, 75 vice neutrons and 111 assistant-vice neutrons . . . held together by a force that involves the continuous exchange of meson-like particles called memos. . . . The most recent experiments show that Administratium has a strong affinity for paper. . . ." So goes, in part, a wonderful bit of whimsy allegedly from Stanford and Caltech. I do a great deal of memo writing, so much that I fancy that at times my tired, downtrodden computer is thinking "Oh no, not another boring memo. Why can't he give me something meatier and more challenging to play with—a paper with footnotes or endnotes, a book chapter with subheadings or at least a measly book review.

Not All Memos are Boring

Nevertheless, not all memos are boring. One source of research support for history faculty and graduate students in recent years has been UCSB's Interdisciplinary Humanities Center. Each application to the IHC requires a memo from the department chair. So this is one way that I can learn what sort of new research is being undertaken. For example, I just read Jack Talbott's description of what will be an important and fascinating book entitled "Mind Wounds: a History of Combat-Induced Mental Disorders." He plans to take evidence from the Crimean War, the American Civil War and the First World War to find out how the notion that mental disorders induced by combat arose, what happened to the victims of such disorders both during and after the wars, how the disorders were treated in literature and the arts and how they related to the wider medical worldview of their eras.

Seed of the Problem

Freud thought that the seed of the problem lay in conscript armies, and John Keegan has argued that the growing lethality of the modern battlefield was to blame. Talbott's subject is thoroughly interdisciplinary, involving the history of science, medicine and psychiatry as well as military history, cultural anthropology and literary studies.

UC History Alum Challenges Associates

The History Associate Scholarship program was recently the beneficiary of an extraordinarily generous offer from Jo Beth and Donald Van Gelderen. The Van Gelderens have pledged the sum of \$3000 to the Scholarship fund with the proviso that the History Associates Membership contribute a matching amount.

Jo Beth Van Gelderen, who received her Ph.D., M.A. and B.A. from UCLA, explained that the offer was a result of the gratitude she felt for having received what "was essentially a free education." The University of California, she feels, "still provides a first rate education at minimal cost to the people of California." Her offer will help insure that funding is made available to those in need within the context of the History Associate Scholarship fund.

Coming from a "UC tradition", her father graduated from Berkeley in 1899, Jo Beth chose to go to UCLA because it was "a smaller and cozier campus." After completing her BA and MA, she was encouraged by the noted historian of California, John Walton Caughey, to pursue graduate studies. "Without his influence," she says, she "would not have continued on in the graduate program." She has also been impressed by Walton's generosity with students. He has established and personally funded a considerable number of scholarship programs at UCLA.

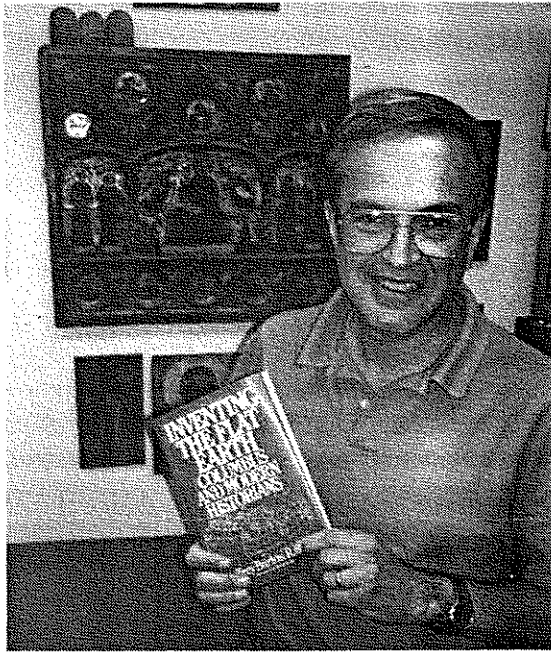
The History Associates are very grateful for the Van Gelderen offer. A campaign is underway to urge the membership to be as generous as possible so that the scholarship program will receive the benefits of this challenge grant. ♦

Supporting Applications

I have also written supporting applications by graduate students Stacey Robertson (on Parker Pillsbury, 1809-98, vigorous American abolitionist and crusader for pacifism and women's rights) and Viviana Marsano (women in secret societies and underground movements in Ulster, 1912-14) and other faculty members David Rock (a comparative study of the Rio de La Plata Republics, Argentina and Uruguay from 1870-1914), Josh Fogel (the literature of travel in the Japanese rediscovery of China, 1862-1945), Zaragosa Vargas (Mexican American labor organizers, 1917-1945), and Sharon Farmer (the private lives of ordinary people in thirteenth-century Paris).

"Administratium" notwithstanding, memo writing (at least some of the time) is really an interesting and enlightening task.

J. Sears McGee
Chair



Prof. Jeffrey Russell,
...rounding the Flat Earth

Flat World Myth Attacked!

In the past four years most of Professor Jeffrey Russell's research energies have been directed towards a new area of research, and the result is a book and two articles in press. The new book, *Rounding the Flat Earth* (Greenwood Press) represents an entirely new turn in Professor Russell's already enormous range of scholarly achievements. At the same time, however, it builds on and further refines some of the philosophical and epistemological points which he has articulated in his five volumes on the history of the concept of the devil. As was the case in the devil volumes, Professor Russell's intellectual approach in this new book far exceeds the boundaries of ordinary historical scholarship.

The new book investigates the origins of the widely held myth that in the middle ages people, and especially churchmen, believed that the world was flat. The myth, Russell has discovered, was first developed in 1834 by Antoine-Jean Letronne, a well-established member of the Académie des sciences and holder of the history chair at the Collège de France.

The intellectual context for the origin of the myth was the anticlericalism of post-revolutionary France.

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Drake

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occupying both sides of the street for several blocks—bringing back memories of shopping in Rome and Florence. In the other direction, the Redding Market is an indoor cavern of shops offering everything from sushi to fresh eggs and baked goods trucked in by Amish farmers from Lancaster. The sausages and cold cuts at Siegfried's would bring tears to Joe Remak's eyes.

•Public transit. Cheap, reliable, and clean. It took me a while to realize that I could get anywhere from my front door without a car, but now I'm annoyed if I have to wait so much as five minutes for a bus or train to arrive.

•The food. All sorts of new words have entered my vocabulary. There are no "hamburger stands" in Philly that I've been able to find, but any given block will have up to half a dozen signs offering "steaks" and "hoagies." I had heard of "cheese steaks," of course; but I had no idea what they were (sandwiches heaped with thinly sliced beef, all held together by melted cheese). And I'm still not sure I can tell you the difference between a calzone and a stromboli, or a hoagie and a hero. "Soft pretzels" (invented here) are sold on street corners to passing motorists by the bagful—sort of the way oranges are in L.A.

•"Neighborhoods." It's what everybody says about Philly, and now I know what they mean. Shortly after we arrived, we heard about the special cuisine of Manayuk, a neighborhood only a couple miles from here. It includes a bakery that makes "meat breads" and "tomato pie." No one where we're living had ever heard of these things. The breads turned out to be filled with things like pepperoni and cheese or ham and egg, baked in an Italian loaf and perfect for a cold brunch; the "pie" is an old-fashioned pizza pie, without the cheese and with a crust that you can chew for hours.)

Finally, after all these years, I understand what Otis was saying. Sabbatical is a time to let the mind work by giving it new things to think about. Maybe that book will get written after all! ♦

Talbott

(Continued from p. 1)

building a bigger and better American submarine.

But as the inter-war period went on, planners became more and more interested in conducting economic warfare against Japan. The idea was to strangle the ocean commerce of an island power, Japan, just as the Germans nearly strangled Britain's commerce in WW I.

"By the late 1930's, the sub was viewed as a key weapon in economic warfare. Instead of traveling with the fleet, an idea that was abandoned, submarines would go out on patrols alone to hunt for Japanese merchant shipping."

Professor Talbott received his BA from the University of
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Fedwah Malti-Douglas and Allen Douglas presented a detailed analysis of a biography of Saddam Hussein in the form of a comic strip album. They pointed out that such political albums have been popular in the Arab world since the 1970's. Governments lavish considerable time and money on hiring the best artists and writers to produce them and considerable effort goes into their distribution. An interesting difference between the strip biographies of Hussein and others (Nasser, Kaddafi) is that the latter are presented interacting with other people and very much in their appropriate historical and social settings. Hussein, by contrast, appears as a loner, a kind of mythic hero undergoing a rite of passage as he escaped across the desert after being wounded in an failed assassination attempt on a tyrant. Significantly, emphasis was placed on pre-Islamic traditions such as Bedouin simplicity, hospitality and honor in the telling of Hussein's story. This emphasis was heightened by images as well as words. The appeal was to the traditions of society before the rise of the oppressive state, rather like the appeal of the Old West and the cowboys to American.

Barbara Metcalf, whose research has been mostly among Muslims in India and Pakistan, spoke on the revivalist moment known as the *tablighi jama'at*. Since their foundation in the 1920's, the *tablighis* have attracted an enormous following among Muslims all around the world. Little is known of them outside Islamic countries and groups.

Whereas our perception is that Islam is dominated by clerics and insists on the unity of church and state, the *tablighis* take a consistently apolitical stance. They are "laymen" who go out to their fellow Muslims to urge them to concentrate on personal holiness and to join the *tablighi* crusade. Socially diverse, they avoid voting and are not nationalistic. They are not out to remake the world politically. Rather, as Prof. Metcalf put it, "the shape of the larger world is simply left to God." By delegitimizing politics, their work can, depending upon circumstances, either delegitimize or legitimize particular governments. At a minimum, they represent a kind of Islam quite unfamiliar to most of us.

Roy Mottahedeh addressed "the idea of revolution" in Islamic history. Taking as his case studies the Iranian Revolution of 1979 and the Abbasid Revolution (749-50 A.D.), he asked in what ways they might be compared both to each other and to the American and French Revolutions. Since the very concept of "revolution" is itself a "cultural construct," Prof. Mottahedeh argued that comparisons have to be made carefully. In seventeenth century England, for example, a "revolution" meant simply the completion of a

cycle, a return to a starting point. Thus the restoration of the Stuarts in 1660 was a revolution and the execution of the king in 1649 was not.

Since the great eighteenth-century revolutions in France and North America, our idea of revolution has carried with it notions of the establishment of a new and progressive order along with radical social and institutional change. The Abbasid Revolution, during which the Ummayyad dynasty overthrown, "occurred in an atmosphere of eschatological speculation" about the coming of profound changes. Like the later Western revolutions, the Abbasids succeeded at least in part because of the "implosion" of the old order as it lost confidence and support. Nor was it a palace coup; there was "massive participation" albeit without the notion that the "will of the people" was somehow sovereign.

There are many similarities, Mottahedeh contended, with the 1979 Revolution in Iran. The differences were, however, no less important. The Ayatollah Khomeini sought a "cleansing of society, not a restructuring." And whereas revolutions have often been anticlerical, in Iran it was the clergy who came to power. In the final section of his talk, Prof. Mottahedeh addressed constitutional and jurisprudential aspects of the 1979 revolution and its aftermath. In 1989, the theocratic establishment of 1979 was replaced by a powerful presidency. Thus Iran underwent something "much more like a Western revolution that it at first appeared."

The symposium concluded with Roy Mottahedeh's eloquent praise of Steve Humphreys' contribution to Islamic studies, especially in his new book *Islamic History: a Framework for Inquiry* (Princeton University Press, 1991). Said Mottahedeh, quoting an ancient Persian phrase, "May we all flourish in his shadow." Or as Allen Douglas had said earlier, "We're really here to honor Steve Humphreys and delighted to bask in his glory." The symposium was designed to help celebrate the inauguration of the King Abdul Aziz ibn Chair of Islamic Studies at UCSB. It did that in splendid style. ♦

☆☆History Alumni☆☆

Where are you?

What are you doing?

Drop us a line.

Be published in **Historía**!

Editor, *Historía*
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Talbott

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Missouri in 1962, earned an MA at Stanford a year later, and received his Ph.D. from Stanford in 1966. He has served as a professor of Strategy at the US Naval War College, was a visiting professor of history at Stanford, and an assistant professor of history at Princeton. He joined the UC Santa Barbara history faculty as an associate professor in 1971, and became a professor in 1979.

His published articles include "French Public Opinion and the Algerian War: a research note," "The Myth and Reality of the Paratrooper in the Algerian War," "Weapons Development, War Planning & Policy: The U.S. Navy and the Submarine," and "Maritime Strategy Implications for the Fleet Submarine." A Phi Beta Kappa recipient in 1961,

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Dr. Talbott has earned a number of other honors over the years. Among them are a U.S. Navy prize for the best article on the history of the US Navy, an American Historical Association prize for the best book by a younger scholar, for the publication of his book *The War without a Name: France in Algeria 1954-1962*. Also published is his book, *The Politics of Educational Reform in France, 1918-1940*.

Tickets for the November 20 event at the Sheraton Hotel, 1111 East Cabrillo Blvd. are \$13.00 for members, 15.00 for non members. Reservations and further information are available at the UCSB Office of Community Relations 805 893-2288. ♦

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Russell

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It was picked up in nineteenth century America by Washington Irving (who was both anti-catholic and anti-Spanish, and who wanted to add dramatic flair to his *History of the Life and Voyages of Columbus*). The proponents of Darwinism further developed the myth as a rhetorical strategy against their religious opponents. Christianity, the Darwinists proclaimed incorrectly, had always been opposed to scientific "truth".

No less important is Russell's explanation, in the last chapter, for why the myth continues to flourish, despite the fact that scholars have long known that medieval thinkers knew that the world was round. Here Russell indicts both public school textbooks and popular authors such as Daniel Boorstin, the former librarian of Congress and author of award winning books. Just as in the devil volumes, Russell explicitly takes issue with the theoretical and philosophical

underpinnings of contemporary thought. Specifically he underscores the internal incoherence of modern attempts to combine relativism with progressivism. He writes, *A true relativism would assume that no worldview is better than another; a true progressivism would assume that world views are moving closer and closer to a predetermined and preferred goal. The two beliefs are mutually exclusive. The assumption of the superiority of 'our' views to that of older cultures is the most stubborn remaining variety of ethnocentrism. If we were not so ethnocentrically convinced of the ignorance or stupidity of the Middle Ages, we would not fall into the Flat Earth Error. The hope that we are making progress toward a goal (which is not defined and about which there is no consensus) leads us to undervalue the past in order to convince ourselves of the superiority of the present.*

Professor Russell teaches classes in the History of Christianity, Medieval Europe, and Latin. ♦