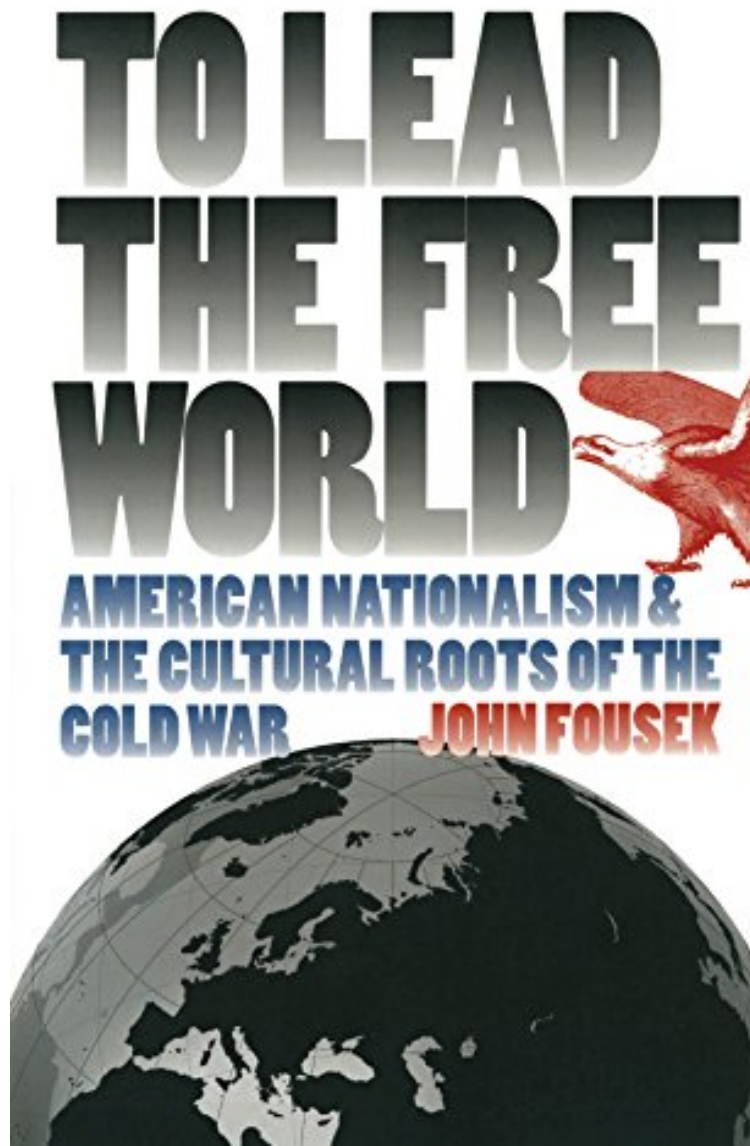


(Download pdf) To Lead the Free World: American Nationalism and the Cultural Roots of the Cold War

# To Lead the Free World: American Nationalism and the Cultural Roots of the Cold War

Von John Fousek

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Von John Fousek : To Lead the Free World: American Nationalism and the Cultural Roots of the Cold War before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised To Lead the Free World: American Nationalism and the Cultural Roots of the Cold War:

KundenrezensionenHilfreichste Kundenrezensionen0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. "Cold War As Culture War" Von Steven S. Berizzi Over a decade after the Berlin Wall was torn down, the Cold War continues to fascinate both scholars and members of the reading public. David McCullough's biography of Harry Truman, which in part told of the modest man from Missouri's fiery determination to stand up to Soviet provocations in the dangerous early years of the Cold War, was immensely popular in the early 1990s, and *Blind Man's Bluff* by Sherry Sontag and Christopher Drew with Annette Lawrence Drew, the fascinating story of Cold War submarine spying, remains just a rung below the paperback nonfiction bestsellers list published by The New York Times. Scholars of American and Soviet culture realize that understanding the origins of the Cold War remains vital to a full appreciation of the titanic, 40-year military confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union, which was the dominant fact of the history of the second half of the 20th century, and John Fousek's *To Lead the Free World: American Nationalism The Cultural Roots of the Cold War* is a splendid addition to this literature. In recent years, American military missions have been sent to places as distant and diverse as Lebanon and Kuwait, Granada, Somalia, and Kosovo, but we must remember that avoiding foreign military commitments, especially outside the area covered by the Monroe Doctrine, once was a central tenet of American diplomatic policy, and that the U.S. stayed aloof after Japan and China went to war in the mid-1930s and during the first two years of the Second World War in Europe. It has been said that American isolationism died at Pearl Harbor, but Fousek, a historian and associate director of Rutgers University's Center for Global Change and Governance, is correct that, in August 1945, most Americans wanted to "bring the boys home." Nevertheless, the United States had important global interests, if for no other reason than to prevent another surprise attack. It is central to Fousek's thesis that the white, male, Protestant upper- and middle-class elite created a globally-activist, anti-Soviet foreign policy. He is correct that the report presented to the National Security Council in early 1950 known as "NSC-68," which Fousek characterizes as the "primal text of American nationalist globalism," was inspired by Secretary of State Dean Acheson and written by Paul Nitze, both card-carrying members of the Eastern establishment. The reasons for the public's support of the narrow, Manichean world view are less clear. If, as Fousek asserts, the ideology of Cold War had come to dominate public life by 1950, it was not because of NSC-68, which remained classified for many years. The reason was more likely economic than strictly ideological. The Second World War was, of course, a tremendous boon to the United States' economy, and, according to Fousek, the United Auto Workers became strong believers in American global responsibility. Fousek provides a lengthy discussion of the meaning of victory. The obvious, but narrow, goal of winning the war had attracted public consensus in the United States. But, according to Fousek, African Americans believed that victory was meaningless unless it brought European colonialism and racial injustice in the United States to an end. The post-war wave of lynchings demonstrated that some things had not changed at all. Fousek devotes considerable space to African Americans in the late 1940s to demonstrate that, even in the moment of victory, American society remained divided racially, economically, socially, and ideologically. One of the most appealing features of this book is a marvelous 12-page "visual essay" demonstrating how corporate advertising and editorial cartoons were illustrative of the widespread belief in the United States mission to lead the free world. My favorite is the Coca-Cola ad in which bare-chested, "battle-seasoned" Seabees land on a Pacific island and introduce the indigenous inhabitants to Coke, "the happy symbol of a friendly way of life." I would have liked Fousek to devote more attention to American technological superiority from air power to atomic weaponry as a source of the United States' confidence in the immediate post-war period. This necessarily would have led to a more extensive discussion of the end of the United States' atomic-bomb monopoly as an important Cold War turning point. Nevertheless, this book will establish itself as a standard text for courses covering the early years of the Cold War.

Kurzbeschreibung In this cultural history of the origins of the Cold War, John Fousek argues boldly that American nationalism provided the ideological glue for the broad public consensus that supported U.S. foreign policy in the Cold War era. From the late 1940s through the late 1980s, the United States waged cold war against the Soviet Union not primarily in the name of capitalism or Western civilization--neither of which would have united the American people behind the cause--but in the name of America. Through close readings of sources that range from presidential speeches and popular magazines to labor union debates and the African American press, Fousek shows how traditional nationalist ideas about national greatness, providential mission, and manifest destiny influenced postwar public culture and shaped U.S. foreign policy discourse during the crucial period from the end of World War II to the beginning of the Korean War. Ultimately, he says, in the atmosphere created by apparently unceasing international crises, Americans rallied around the flag, eventually coming to equate national loyalty with global anticommunism and an interventionist foreign policy. *Pressestimmen* "A lucid, well researched, and tightly argued book." *Political Science Quarterly* "Well-researched and capably argued in an interesting fashion." *Journal of Cold War Studies* "This is a highly thought-provoking book that offers a number of debatable arguments." *American Historical* "Offers considerable insight into the ever-more-complex history of America's Cold War." *Journal of American History* "A

lucid, well researched, and tightly argued book. "Political Science Quarterly" Fousek has provided a sophisticated portrait of postwar American nationalism. "Historian" Kurzbeschreibung In this cultural history of the origins of the Cold War, John Fousek argues boldly that American nationalism provided the ideological glue for the broad public consensus that supported U.S. foreign policy in the Cold War era. From the late 1940s through the late 1980s, the United States waged cold war against the Soviet Union not primarily in the name of capitalism or Western civilization--neither of which would have united the American people behind the cause--but in the name of America. Through close readings of sources that range from presidential speeches and popular magazines to labor union debates and the African American press, Fousek shows how traditional nationalist ideas about national greatness, providential mission, and manifest destiny influenced postwar public culture and shaped U.S. foreign policy discourse during the crucial period from the end of World War II to the beginning of the Korean War. Ultimately, he says, in the atmosphere created by apparently unceasing international crises, Americans rallied around the flag, eventually coming to equate national loyalty with global anticommunism and an interventionist foreign policy.