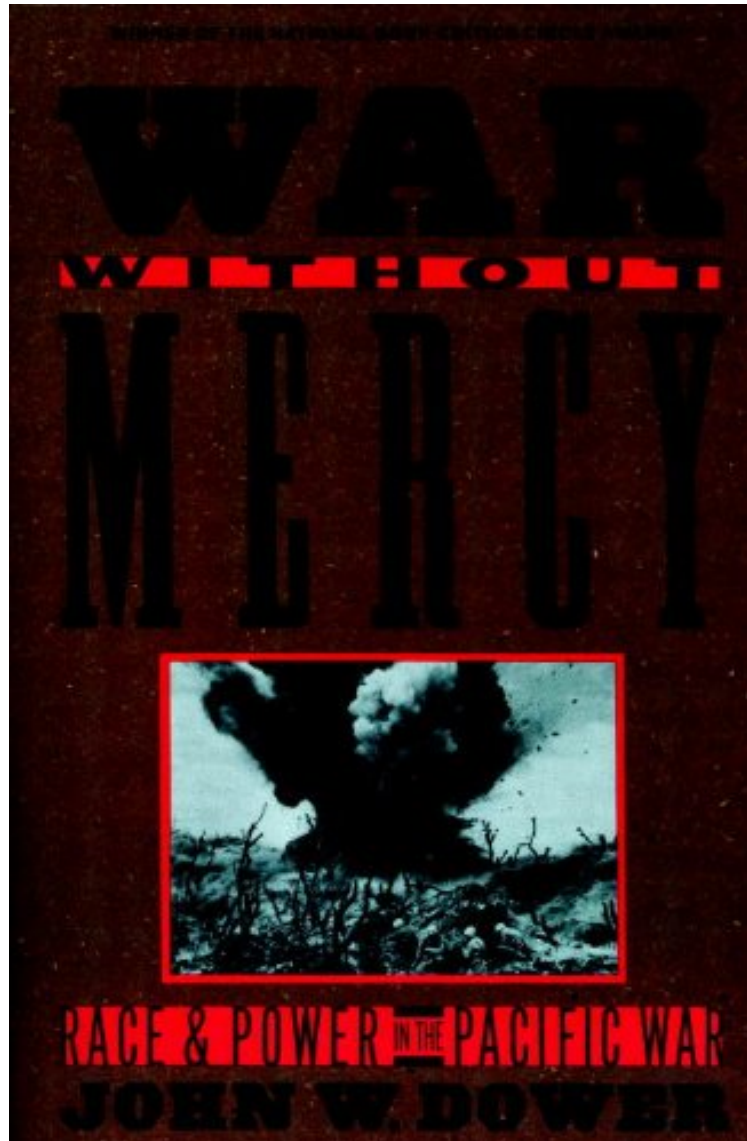


(Read now) War without Mercy: PACIFIC WAR

War without Mercy: PACIFIC WAR

Von John Dower

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Von John Dower : War without Mercy: PACIFIC WAR before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised War without Mercy: PACIFIC WAR:

KundenrezensionenHilfreichste Kundenrezensionen0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. In my eyes this is undeniably a very good book.Von Andr GeienhnerBut I must say right away that while it is a good introduction (and nothing more, I have to be honest there) into the topic of racism in the Pazific War during World War II, I would not recommend it for casual readers. The book is good in debunking the, apparently not so rare, notion

that racism is equal to white supremacy, but the quotes it often has (which you can't blame the author for) were done by people who for all their efforts still seemed to be trapped into the "White vs. Coloured" dichotomy, which in my mind often leads to many people to e.g. ignore the leopard in the picture. But either way, this is a completely recommendable book. It doesn't shy away from showing the racist propaganda images and attitudes of both sides at the time. And to be honest considered this, it is astounding how far we have actually come, after all today even in war you cannot any longer just make stuff like this. I like the information on the, somewhat ambiguous, role of the Japanese as they inspired countless millions of Asians with their audacity, even as they inspired hatred by their own overweening arrogance. For the Japanese were as racist as their Anglo-American adversaries. And that although the Japanese government frequently admonished its officials and citizens to avoid all manifestations of racial discrimination, the operative language of the new sphere was in fact premised on the belief that the Japanese were destined to preside over a fixed hierarchy of peoples and races. As you can probably guess by now, you get insights into Japan's own colorism and racism of the time and its "savior" mentality which I think is not exactly gone today: Like pallid copies of the old Sino-Japanese War prints, Japanese cartoons during World War Two frequently depicted the people of southern and southeastern Asia as dark-skinned, while the Japanese standing among them were light. Note: This is has nothing to do with them wanting to be "white," as many still believe today, but rather their own cultural colorism that links whiteness with purity, as the book makes perfectly clear. Also you clearly see how similar both sides of the war actually were despite old and new claims to the contrary, e.g. both sides elevated dying on the battle field to nearly divine actions when it concerned their own soldiers but the very same actions by the enemies was seen as signs of their inherent inferiority. And when you read how the Kyoto school dealt with such broad and amorphous concepts as "perpetual war" and "total war"; "living space" and "historical space" you tend to be reminded of other people who also used and still use such concepts. As examples the book shows how the Anglo-Americans were described as demons (oni), devils (kichiku), fiends (akki and akuma), and monsters (kaibutsu). More elaborate variations were offered on occasion, such as "hobgoblins" and "hairy, twisted-nosed savages," but the basic image remained intact - as did the natural response to being confronted by such forces of evil. And how the Anglo-Americans consistently emphasized the "subhuman" nature of the Japanese, routinely turning to images of apes and vermin to convey this. With more tempered disdain, they portrayed the Japanese as inherently inferior men and women who had to be understood in terms of primitivism, childishness, and collective mental and emotional deficiency. Cartoonists, songwriters, filmmakers, war correspondents, and the mass media in general all seized on these images - and so did the social scientists and Asia experts who ventured to analyze the Japanese "national character" during the war. Another example of similarities is "proper place" and the author shows how "proper place" had a long pedigree in the history of Asian thought going back to early Confucianism in China. While the concept flourished for centuries as a pure product of the Confucian tradition, however, and later came to assume the coloration of Japanese family-system ideologies as well, it is misleading to see it as peculiarly Asian. For practical purposes, "proper place" was the functional equivalent of the Great Chain of Being in Western thought, and like that potent concept served in the mundane world to rationalize and reinforce disparate status and power relationships among people, races and countries. And let's face it such information is not actually known to the general public. So I agree with the author when he says at the end: To return to that terrible conflict of four decades ago is thus inevitable and essential - and fraught with peril. It can teach us many things, but can also fan the fires of contemporary anger and self-righteousness. In whatever way, World War Two in Asia has become central to our understanding not only of the past, but of the present as well.

4 von 4 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. A reflection of ourselves by looking at the enemy
Von TG Smith
Most of us read in school about how the peoples of War-era Japan or the former Soviet Union were manipulated by the press and other media. This book is about the subtle and not-so-subtle media manipulation in the US and Japan during the War in the Pacific. In many ways, the media messages in the respective countries mirrored each other. For example, both Japan and the US looked upon each other as simian others. That is to say, the Japanese portrayed Americans as large apes and we portrayed them as monkeys. Another aspect of the war-time propaganda that the book explores is how each side used the protection of their country's women from the rapacious enemy as cause to fight. Many other examples of how we and our enemy de-humanized the other to make killing easier are presented throughout the text. The book includes many images of political cartoons and magazine covers that are shocking in their brutal stereotyping of the enemy. It is somewhat ironic that two countries which claimed to be so different from each other could make that claim in such similar ways. If you are interested in the Pacific War or about how propaganda was used in either the US or Japan, I would highly recommend this book.

2 von 2 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. Momotaro vs. Uncle Sam
Von Customer
A well-written, engaging, and illuminating account of how the Pacific War, which had been going on since 1931 (some might argue since 1895, when Japan defeated China in their struggle for control of Korea and Taiwan), became embroiled into the larger world conflict and how American and Japanese cultures dealt with it. The examination of ethnocentric stereotypes is superb. One would think that those who know anything about World War II in the Pacific from the American point of view would be aware of the anti-Japanese stereotypes (in, for example, the propaganda films of Frank Capra). As a result, Dower particularly fascinates with his analysis of Japanese propaganda (the familiar folk tale of Momotaro the Peach Boy having a more sinister

underside than I was aware of, reading it in first grade) which might not be very well known to most American readers. This book should be suggested for any class on the Twentieth Century, and required for any class on World War II or the Pacific War in particular.

Kurzbeschreibung
WINNER OF THE NATIONAL BOOK CRITICS CIRCLE AWARD
AN AMERICAN BOOK AWARD FINALIST
Now in paperback, *War Without Mercy* has been hailed by *The New York Times* as one of the most original and important books to be written about the war between Japan and the United States. In this monumental history, Professor John Dower reveals a hidden, explosive dimension of the Pacific War while writing what John Toland has called a landmark book . . . a powerful, moving, and evenhanded history that is sorely needed in both America and Japan. Drawing on American and Japanese songs, slogans, cartoons, propaganda films, secret reports, and a wealth of other documents of the time, Dower opens up a whole new way of looking at that bitter struggle of four and a half decades ago and its ramifications in our lives today. As Edwin O. Reischauer, former ambassador to Japan, has pointed out, this book offers a lesson that the postwar generations need most . . . with eloquence, crushing detail, and power.
Dower's premise in *War without Mercy* is a startling one: Though Western allies were clearly headed for victory, pure racism fueled the continuation and intensification of hostilities in the Pacific theater during the final year of World War II, a period that saw as many casualties as in the first five years of the conflict combined. Dower doesn't reach this disturbing conclusion lightly. He combed through piles of propaganda films, news articles, military documents, cartoons--even entries in academic journals in researching this book. Though his case is strong, Dower minimizes other factors, such as the protracted negotiations between the West and the Japanese.
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