

ship (and with it, any chance of running as the Federalist candidate for president in the fall against incumbent Thomas Jefferson), Burr thought that a triumph in the field of honor over Washington's heir, Hamilton—a triumph that could consist merely in securing a retraction—would help him realize the dream he had begun to entertain: armed conquest of Texas and Mexico.

Hamilton, meanwhile, was “a man riven by conflicting emotions and necessities.” A humble apology was sure to be made public, destroying whatever influence he had in the New York Federalist Party. With Yankee Federalists threatening to secede from the nation in response to the Louisiana Purchase and Virginians' perceived political hegemony, apologizing might also destroy Hamilton's chances to lead a New England army. And it “would certainly disqualify him as the leader of a national army if Napoléon . . . headed across the Atlantic to regain France's colonial empire.”

Hamilton had lately turned to Christianity and may have believed, wrongly, that a Christian must abjure self-defense. Fleming thinks Hamilton was unconsciously seeking to atone for having advised his 19-year-old son, facing a duel with a Jefferson supporter whom the youth had carelessly insulted, to throw away his first shot. In addition, the historian suspects that Hamilton hoped his death, if it occurred, would destroy the hated Burr as a political and military leader. Fleming expertly tells how the gripping drama played out.

—Robert K. Landers

ORPHANS OF THE COLD WAR:

America and the Tibetan Struggle for Survival.

By John Kenneth Knaus. PublicAffairs. 398 pp. \$27.50

Blending history and memoir, *Orphans of the Cold War* vividly recounts a fascinating, hitherto unknown tale of American covert actions in Asia. In 1950, with the State Department still reeling from the victory of the “Chi-Coms” (as the Maoists were called) a year earlier, China invaded Tibet. The United States sought a United Nations resolution condemning the invasion, to no avail. “If it struggled in the diplomatic sphere,” writes Knaus, “the United States showed no signs of hesitation when it came to the secret

war for Tibet.” He speaks with some authority, having been one of the Central Intelligence Agency officers who trained Tibetan soldiers in guerrilla warfare at Camp Hale, Colorado.

Contrary to what has been called “the Shangri-la Syndrome,” the Tibetan people are not mystical pacifists. For centuries they were among Central Asia's fiercest warriors, maintaining a huge empire and even holding the Mongol hordes at bay. In the mid-1950s, when the Chinese imposed “democratic reforms”—a plague of raids, pillaging, and public torture—the Khampa of eastern Tibet (some of whom became Knaus's students at Camp Hale) united in an armed rebellion, which won early victories before being crushed by the superior force of the Chinese. Until the early 1970s, CIA-trained Tibetan guerrillas raided their homeland from bases in Nepal. In 1961 one such foray provided the CIA with classified Chinese documents revealing the famine and chaos of Mao's Great Leap Forward, a debacle of social engineering that cost 40 to 60 million lives.

But the Kissinger Doctrine reversed the policy of isolating Communist China, and the United States stopped aiding the Tibetan guerrillas. Wangdu, the charismatic guerrilla leader, was killed in an ambush by Nepalese troops just miles from India, where he had been offered sanctuary. Some soldiers did escape to India, but many were shot or committed suicide, and others languished in prison cells for years. Tibet was sealed behind the Iron Curtain, largely forgotten until the Dalai Lama won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1989. Knaus hopes that the growing international interest in Tibet will help bring about a negotiated resolution.

The author makes no pretense of being dispassionate. “When the U.S. government first became involved with Tibet in 1951,” he writes, “its commitments contained a measure of the idealism that was part of the Truman Doctrine of assisting free peoples. . . . The men . . . [chosen] to carry out this program quickly made common cause with the Tibetans. It was not ‘their’ war they were fighting, it was ours, and we wanted them to win it.” We owe Knaus a measure of gratitude, for his work in the field and for writing this engaging book about a tragic Cold War episode.

—Maura Moynihan