



An Ike supporter in 1952

at Harvard University. There are beautiful young women in these pages, and sometimes what seems to be my whole family tree. The book is a good extension of Edward Steichen's *The Family Of Man* (1955).

And yet I wish that Norfleet somehow could show postwar America's impact on those of us who returned after a seemingly endless time away. Military service had given us a kind of self-control and dignity. The wartime agonies seemed to melt away, leaving us, in our own opinion at least, stronger than ever. The war changed the nation too, and we came back to a strange new world, which gave us a lot.

That world still seems alien. Some photos in *When We Liked Ike* provoke the eerie feeling of wandering among strangers. There are few smiles on display, though I am glad to see that, as a sign proclaims, there will be no profane language at any time.

—SLOAN WILSON

**SEEKING VICTORY ON
THE WESTERN FRONT:
*The British Army and Chemical
Warfare in World War I.***

By Albert Palazzo. Univ. of Nebraska
Press. 245 pp. \$50

Though World War I has been written about exhaustively, Palazzo offers a genuinely fresh dimension by focusing on the British army's extensive and imaginative use of gas. The Germans may have pioneered its use in

1915, but the British developed it, devised and put into mass production the most lethal chemicals, and provided their troops with by far the better gas masks. Above all, the British incorporated gas into their operational doctrine and training in a methodical way, a key consideration in the defense of Field Marshal Douglas Hague and his much maligned staff against the usual charge that they were unimaginative butchers.

In 1915, Major Charles Foulkes of the Royal Engineers took command of the Special Brigade, as the chemical warfare unit was formally known. An inventive bunch, many of them drawn from universities and chemistry labs, the Special Brigade experimented with pepper sprays, itching powder, nicotine, and other poisons before concentrating on phosgene and mustard gas. (They also developed flame-throwers.) Their work was reasonably well known in the 1920s and 1930s, partly through Foulkes's memoir, *Gas!* (1934). But the dominance of tanks in World War II, along with the decision on both sides to avoid gas, has blurred the focus of modern military historians. Palazzo, a research associate at the Australian Defense Force Academy, does a service in restoring awareness of the prominent role of gas and demonstrating that it was part of a new British military doctrine of combined arms.

The Allied victories of 1918 are usually said to start with the Battle of Amiens on August 8, which the German commander Erich Ludendorff described in his diaries as "the black day of the German army." Palazzo, after describing the earlier British efforts with gas at the battles of Loos and the Somme, focuses instead on the small Battle of Hamel on July 4. It was here that the Fourth Australian Division, supported by four companies of American troops, fought one of the most successful and most significant actions of the war. Through the combined use of gas, tanks, and artillery, along with tactical surprise, they showed that the stalemate on the Western front could be broken.

It was not gas alone but the incorporation of gas into a wider offensive strategy that brought success. The British calibrated each individual gun barrel and calculated the effects of wind and temperature to ensure that guns could hit targets the first time, without the traditional ranging shots that would have alerted the Germans to their

presence. They also used gas in the days before the attack as a morale weapon, drenching the approaches through which German ration parties brought food and drink and ammunition by night to the front lines. The British had so much of the stuff that they would routinely continue gas bombardments for days at a time, knowing that at some point the German gas masks would be overwhelmed. And they would mix their fire, using shrapnel to force the German troops to take cover in trenches and dugouts, where the follow-up rounds of gas would be most lethal. From research in the archives of artillery units and the Ministry of Munitions, Palazzo demonstrates that by 1918 British barrages were routinely half gas and half high explosive.

At the Ministry of Munitions, Winston Churchill was so enthusiastic that he promised to triple the number of gas shells in 1919 if the war continued. By the time of the Armistice in November 1918, the British, French, and American armies were all enthusiastic converts to the new potential of chemical warfare. The heartening surprise is that, in the 1920s and 1930s, memories of the horrors and a strong pacifist sensibility produced such public outrage that statesmen sought to ban gas warfare and generals agreed to abjure it.

—MARTIN WALKER

**LAW WITHOUT VALUES:
*The Life, Work, and Legacy of
Justice Holmes.***

By Albert W. Alschuler. Univ. of Chicago Press. 325 pp. \$30

When I ask law students to name three leading Supreme Court justices, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr. (1841–1935) always gets mentioned. Was he, as the students maintain, one of the great liberal justices on the Court? The answer is a definite maybe.

Along with those who resolutely defend Holmes's liberal credentials, there are those who vigorously challenge them. Grant Gilmore, selected by the Holmes estate to write the justice's authorized biography (a project he never completed), reached this conclusion: "Put out of your mind the picture of the tolerant aristocrat, the great liberal, the eloquent defender of our liberties, the

Yankee from Olympus. All that was a myth, concocted principally by Harold Laski and Felix Frankfurter, about the time of World War I. The real Holmes was savage, harsh, and cruel, a bitter and lifelong pessimist who saw in the course of human life nothing but a continuing struggle in which the rich and powerful impose their will on the poor and weak."

Alschuler, a professor at the University of Chicago Law School, quotes Gilmore's statement, adopts it, and makes it his theme. He charges that Holmes injected a poisonous skepticism into the body of American law, that he permitted government to behave unjustly, and, worst of all, that he did not believe in a divinely imposed distinction between right and wrong. The book bespeaks careful scholarship and a long-term, intense, and, one might say, obsessive interest in Holmes and his legacy.

Like other Holmes biographies (this is the fourth in 12 years), *Law without Values* says much about the main event in Holmes's life, the battlefield woundings he suffered as a Union soldier in the Civil War. For the rest of his years, Holmes reflected on his military service. He often described life itself as a battle carried on by soldiers blindly following orders drafted by an unseen hand.

After the war, Holmes attended Harvard Law School. He did some teaching. He wrote *The Common Law* (1881), a book that is still in print, still being scrutinized by cheerleaders and detractors. He tried practicing law but didn't like it. When offered an appointment to the Massachusetts state trial court, he grabbed it. In 1902, President Theodore Roosevelt appointed him to the Supreme Court, where he served for 30 years.

Moral preferences are "more or less arbitrary," Holmes wrote. "Do you like sugar in your coffee or don't you? . . . So as to truth." He believed that these "more or less arbitrary" choices ought to be made by legislators, not judges, so he was disinclined to strike down laws as unconstitutional. He voted to uphold progressive laws (hence, in part, his liberal reputation), but he also voted to uphold regressive ones. The author blames Holmesian moral skepticism for some of the social disintegration we see today—no discipline, no standards. Strange that Holmes, a man who imposed